NATION

Flood situation remains grim in Arunachal

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

Sensex hits historic mark, Nifty ends at record high

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

Demiral's heroics help Turkey book quarterfinal spot

≫ Page: 8 ≪

www.twitter.com/EnglishSalar
www.facebook.com/EnglishSalar
www.instagram.com/dailysalarenglish
youtube.com/@dailysalardigital

SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڈھ روزنامہ بنگلور

Website: salarnews.in | www.magzter.com | 4 JULY 2024 | THURSDAY | BENGALURU | 27 DHU'L-HIJJAH, 1445 AH | Vol 4 | Issue No 162 | Pages: 8

WE ARE HIRING

SUB-EDITOR
WEB EDITOR

Journalism degree preferred but not essential

Applicants with maximum 2 years of experience preferred. Freshers are encouraged to apply

SEND YOUR CV TO

asma@salar.news
anushreeirwin@gmail.com

3 more bridges collapse in Bihar, 9th incident in 15 days

PATNA, 3 JULY

Bihar witnessed the collapse of at least three more bridges or causeways on Wednesday, marking the ninth such incident in the rain-affected state within the past 15 days.

No casualties were reported after the three structures, built 30 to 80 years ago by local authorities, caved in during the day in Saran and Siwan districts, officials said.

RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav, however, alleged that four bridges collapsed in a single day and the Chief Minister and his deputies are silent.

Chief Minister Nitish Kumar directed Road Construction Department (RCD) and Rural Works Department (RWD) to immediately conduct a survey of all old bridges in the state and identify those that require immediate repairing.

"These structures don't seem to have been constructed following required parameters. It also appears that the foundation was not deep enough, a reason why these structures got damaged during floods," it said.

First, a portion of a small bridge over Gandaki river in Deoria block of Siwan district collapsed at around 5am.

Later, another small bridge reportedly met the same fate in Teghra block of the district. Despite repeated attempts, the district magistrate of Siwan was not available for his comments. Two more small bridges also collapsed in Saran, District Magistrate Aman Samir said. "One small bridge that collapsed in Janta Bazar area was 100 years old. Another one that caved in is located in Lahladpur area and was built 25 years ago," Samir said. Local people suggested that heavy rainfall for the past few days may have contributed to the collapse of these small bridges.

More than 10 such incidents of bridge collapse have been reported from different parts of the state in the last 15 days. Meanwhile, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar directed RWD and RCD officials to immediately conduct a survey of all old bridges. —*PTI*

No casualties were reported after the three structures, built 30 to 80 years ago by local authorities caved in **PHOTO: SCREENGRAB**

UP stampede: Toll hits 121; 2.5L had single entry & exit

Accused claims stampede was due to anti-social elements

HATHRAS, 3 JULY

The death toll in the stampede that broke out in a 'satsang' organised by the godman Narayan Sakaar Hari here rose to 121 on Wednesday. The police filed an FIR against the organisers, accusing them of hiding evidence and flouting conditions with 2.5 lakh people crammed into a venue in which only 80,000 were permitted.

He is not named in the list of the accused in the FIR filed in the incident though his name is in the complaint.

A lawyer representing the Baba however claimed that "anti-social elements" were behind the stampede and contradicted preliminary reports that the tragedy struck when his followers rushed to collect the soil touched by his feet.

According to police, entry and departure points were not properly marked, and there were neither medical stations nor ambulances at the location as required by law.

And when the stampede broke out, the confusion was exacerbated by the lack of designated evacuation routes and emergency exits.

According to a preliminary report submitted by the Sikandra Rau sub-divisional magistrate (SDM) the stampede was caused by chaos that ensued after the Baba's followers were pushed by the godman's security, and a "slippery slope" exacerbated the situation. The report also noted that the SDM, who had granted permission for the 'satsang' was present at the venue. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Adityanath has announced that the families of the deceased would receive Rs 2 lakh each and the injured would receive Rs 50,000 each in compensation.

Meanwhile, Agra police cancelled two congregations of Bhole Baba which was supposed to be held from 4 -11 July in Saiyan and the other from 13 -23 July in Shastripuram.

The police have said that the Baba had adopted a girl, who died around 16-17 years back. Baba had kept her body at home for two days hoping she would come alive.

Baba who equated himself to God in his sermons chose not to make a public appearance.

According to the New York Times, a family lost three generations of women in the stampede. —*PTI*

People cremate bodies of three members of family who died in the stampede in Hathras, on Wednesday **PHOTO: PTI**

STAMPEDE AT SAME BABA'S EVENT

HATHRAS, 3 JULY

According to a report by *The Print*, residents of Hathras district, a satsang organised in their village by the same self-styled godman saw a stampede 12 years ago too that claimed several lives.

Mangal Yadav, who has stayed over 40 years in Hathras where he owns a garment shop, said he had forbidden his family members from attending Tuesday's satsang. "That satsang was held a kilometre away from the current location ," he claimed.

—*Salar News*

Yogi suggests possible conspiracy

HATHRAS, 3 JULY

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday announced a judicial probe into the Hathras tragedy while not ruling out the possibility of a "conspiracy" behind the stampede that killed 121 people.

He also said the "sevadars" (volunteers working for the 'satsang' organisers) should have taken the victims to the hospital. People were dying and the "sevadars" fled, he claimed.

— *PTI*

J'KHAND TURMOIL

Champai resigns, Hemant to take over

RANCHI, 3 JULY

Jharkhand Chief Minister Champai Soren on Wednesday resigned from his post, following which JMM leader Hemant Soren called on Governor CP Radhakrishnan and staked a claim to form the government.

Earlier in the day, leaders and MLAs of the ruling coalition at a meeting at Champai's residence here unanimously decided to elect Hemant as the JMM legislature party leader.

"I have resigned as per the decision of the JMM-led alliance. Our alliance is strong," Champai Soren said after coming out of Raj Bhavan.

Hemant told the media all formalities to form the government are complete.

"Everything will be disclosed soon," he said when asked about the swearing-in.

He will be the chief minister of Jharkhand for the third time.

The ruling coalition delegation which met the governor included state Congress in-charge Ghulam Ahmad Mir, state Congress president Rajesh Thakur, RJD Minister Satyanand Bhokta, CPI(ML) legislator Vinod Singh, besides Champai and Hemant.

After spending around five months in jail, Hemant was released on 28 June after the High Court granted him bail in a money laundering case linked to an alleged land scam.

He had resigned as the chief minister shortly before his arrest on 31 January.

Meanwhile, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) is expected to approach the Supreme Court soon with a special leave petition (SLP) against a recent Jharkhand High Court order that granted bail to Hemant in a money-laundering case. —*PTI*

Hemant Soren **PHOTO: PTI**

VANDE BHARAT LEAKS

Passengers aboard the Delhi to Varanasi Vande Bharat Express were taken aback when water started leaking from the train's roof. The video has put the Railways under scrutiny **PHOTO: SCREENGRAB**

K'taka govt caps rate for dengue tests

BENGALURU, 3 JULY

Karnataka Health Department has issued an order to provide free treatment for dengue fever in government hospitals, on Wednesday. Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao issued an order fixing the rates for dengue tests in private hospitals. According to the statement, "Private hospitals should follow the rates fixed by the government and are bound to charge Rs 300 for Dengue ELISA NS1, Rs 300 for Dengue IGM, and Rs 250 for screening and rapid tests." He also instructed health department officials to take action against private hospitals that overcharge for dengue testing. —*Salar News*

Curtains down for X replica Koo app

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

Koo, the Indian replica of Twitter (now X), is shutting down operations, its co-founders announced on Wednesday blaming the platform's failed attempts at partnerships and harsh funding winter for the closure. The announcement brings curtains down on Koo - which was launched in 2000 and whose popularity in India soared around 2021 following the Indian government's spat with X. Back then, amid growing calls for expanding the ecosystem of homegrown digital platforms, several Union ministers, had signed up on Koo. However failed acquisition talks took a toll on the platform which later struggled with dwindling user base and resorted to layoffs, last year. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 7

NEET ROW: CBI ARRESTS KEY CONSPIRATOR

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

The CBI arrested an alleged co-conspirator in the National Eligibility Cum Entrance Test NEET-UG paper leak case, Aman Singh, from Dhanbad in Jharkhand, officials said on Wednesday.

The CBI has developed intelligence about Jharkhand-based module allegedly involved in the paper leak that resulted in the arrest of Singh, they said.

The agency had earlier arrested principal and vice principal of Hazaribagh-based Oasis school in the case and two persons who allegedly provided safe premises to NEET candidates where burnt question papers were recovered by Bihar Police, the officials said.

The CBI has registered six FIRs in the case. The FIR from Bihar pertains to leakage of paper while remaining from Gujarat and Rajasthan pertains to impersonation of candidates and cheating.

The agency's own FIR on a reference from the Union Education Ministry pertains to a "comprehensive investigation" into alleged irregularities in the medical entrance examination. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

Girl found dead at KSR stn, rape suspected

BENGALURU, 3 JULY

A six-year-old girl was found dead at Krantiveera Sangolli Rayanna Railway Station (KSR) Bengaluru on Wednesday. According to the police, the girl was found in the parking lot at KSR. The body had signs of bruises, and the clothes had blood-stains. The authorities suspect that she was raped, murdered, and then dumped in the parking lot.

Speaking to **Salar News**, Railway Superintendent of Police (SP) Soumya Latha said, " It appears the child was murdered elsewhere and then brought here. The body has been sent to Victoria Hospital, KR Market for post-mortem." The girl is identified as the daughter of a couple who work as labourers at KSR. The girl was discovered by the railway staff in the early hours of Wednesday.

—*Salar News*

VIOLENCE DECLINING IN MANIPUR, SAYS MODI; OPPOSITION ATTACKS

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Wednesday that violence in Manipur is continuously declining and educational institutes along with businesses have opened in most parts of the state.

He asserted that all efforts are being made to ensure a return of complete peace in the state.

"We must acknowledge the fact that the incidents of violence in Manipur are on a continuous downward trajectory," he said, adding that this meant the hope for peace is a definite possibility in Manipur.

Modi informed the Upper House house that schools, colleges, offices and other institutions are now functioning normally in Manipur.

Meanwhile, hitting out at Modi over his remarks on Manipur in the Rajya Sabha, Congress on Wednesday said he made an "astounding claim" that the situation is normal there when in actuality it is still tense and pointed out that he has still not visited the state since violence erupted in May last year. —*PTI*

SCREENING FOR PREGNANT WOMEN

Govt urges vigil amid Zika rise

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

In view of some cases of Zika virus reported from parts of Maharashtra, the Union Health Ministry on Wednesday issued an advisory to all states highlighting the need for maintaining a constant vigil over the situation in the country.

States have been urged to focus on screening pregnant women for Zika virus and monitor the growth of foetus of expecting mothers who tested positive for the infection.

Besides the advisory by Director General of Health Services Dr Atul Goel, the ministry also asked health facilities to identify a nodal officer to monitor and act to keep the premises free of Aedes mosquito infestation.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Zika is an Aedes mosquito-borne viral disease like dengue and chikungunya. Though non-fatal, Zika is associated with microcephaly (a condition where the head is much smaller than expected) in babies born to affected pregnant women which makes it a cause of major concern.

The states have been urged to promote awareness through precautionary IEC messages in social media and other platforms to reduce panic among the community as Zika is like any other viral infection with most cases being asymptomatic and mild. The Health Ministry said that though Zika is reported to be associated with microcephal. No report of any such Zika-associated microcephaly has been reported in the country since 2016, the Health Ministry said.

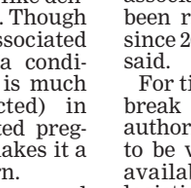
For timely detection and outbreak of the infection, state authorities have been advised to be vigilant and ensure the availability of appropriate logistics at all levels. —*PTI*

Drunk City college student stabs security guard to death

BENGALURU, 3 JULY

An intoxicated final-year student of Sindhi College at Kempapura in Bengaluru allegedly stabbed to death a security guard of his college on Wednesday after the latter refused him entry to the college.

The 24-year-old BA student, Bhargav Jyothi Burman, was arrested for allegedly killing Bihar native Jai Kishore Roy, 30. On Wednesday, Bhargav tried to enter the college grounds allegedly under the influence of alcohol and the guard on duty, Roy, refused him entry. Infuriated Bhargav left the college premises, but returned later with a knife.



As Bhargav, who stayed in a PG accommodation near the college, attempted to enter the college again, the security guard asked him to leave. In a heated confrontation, Bhargav attacked the guard with a knife, inflicting multiple stab wounds. The critically injured guard was taken to a nearby hospital but was declared dead on arrival.

An official with Amruthahalli police said: "We have registered a case under BNS section 103 for murder. An investigation is underway to determine what exactly happened, from where the murder weapon was sourced and what is the motive behind the killing."

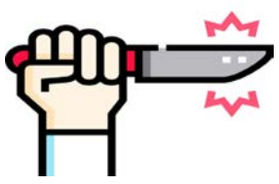
This incident comes after Neha Hiremath was killed by her former classmate in a college in Hubballi on 18 April. Weeks later, Girish Sawant, 23, killed 21-year-old Anjali Ambigera in Hubballi for rejecting his love proposal.

—*Salar News*

Belagavi: Infant dies, parents allege medical negligence

BELAGAVI, 3 JULY

A 7-month-old-baby who was admitted four days prior due to illness in a private hospital in Belagavi died before he could be transferred to another hospital on Tuesday. The family have accused the hospital of medical negligence. Hospital equipment was damaged in an ensuing clash between the family and the medical staff. The child's condition had deteriorated late Tuesday, prompting the doctor to recommend an emergency transfer to another hospital. According to sources, the child's parents complied with the doctor's advice and arranged for an ambulance. However, before the transfer could occur, the doctor informed the parents that the child had already died. The police have assured that a thorough investigation will be conducted to determine the cause of the child's death and whether there was any medical negligence involved. They are also looking into the damage caused during the incident and assured of appropriate action against those responsible for the vandalism. *—Salar News*



Man stabbed to death near City police station

BENGALURU, 3 JULY

A 35-year-old man, Ajith, was stabbed to death for not being able to pay back loan in Cox town, on Wednesday. The victim was an employee of ITC and he had borrowed money from the accused at high interest rates but was not able to pay it back. There were constant quarrels between the two over the money and its repayment. The accused was waiting for Ajith and stabbed him in full public view and managed to escape. "I saw a crowd while passing the area and I saw the man lying on the road", said a woman who was passing by the area on job search. The accused had travelled from Electronic City to Cox Town to commit the crime. The victim was killed near the premises of his house while he was returning home from work. The case has been lodged at Pulkeshi nagar police station and the investigation is underway. *—Salar News*

Bodies of 2 alleged gamblers fished out, 4 missing

VIJAYAPURA, 3 JULY

Police have fished out the bodies of two youths who were among the six people feared drowned after their coracle overturned in Krishna river in Vijayapura district. A search is on for four others, police said on Wednesday. As many as eight persons, who were allegedly gambling on the river bank at Hale Baluti village, tried to escape in the coracle after a police raid on Tuesday. The coracle capsized in the swollen river. Two of them managed to swim to safety, police said. *—PTI*

Worker trapped under soil at construction site

MANGALURU, 3 JULY

Two workers were trapped underneath the soil when several tonne of loose soil allegedly slipped into a pit opened up for further construction on Wednesday. Of them, one has been rescued, officials said. The incident happened at Balmatta road in the heart of the city. One of the workers has been rescued and rushed to the hospital, officials said. Commissioner of Police and senior officials rushed to the spot. The SDRF and fire department officials have launched operations to rescue the trapped worker. *—PTI*

BJP leaders march to CM's residence; taken into custody

Hand over MUDA scam to CBI, says Leader of Oppn R Ashoka

BENGALURU, 3 JULY

Opposition BJP leaders tried to lay siege to Chief Minister's office-cum-residence here on Wednesday alleging rampant corruption by the ruling Congress government in Karnataka, but they were stopped and taken into preventive custody. The protesting MLAs, MLCs and other party workers were taken to Seshadripuram Police Station and were released in the afternoon. After the protesters were prevented from protesting in front of Chief Minister's residence, they trooped down to the roads in front of CM's residence and yelled chants, 'Dhikhara Dhikara, Sarkara Dikhara' (Down Down, Government Down).

The party leaders, including BJP State President BY Vijayendra, Leader of Opposition R Ashoka, former ministers S Sunil Kumar, Araga Jnanendra, S Suresh Kumar, CN Ashwath Narayan and CT Ravi, were accompanied by MLAs and party workers. Due to the heavy deployment of police forces, the BJP leaders could not reach their destination and were taken under preventive custody.

State BJP President BY Vijayendra and Opposition Leader R Ashoka being detained in Bengaluru on Wednesday *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

The party has alleged that there was around Rs 4,000 crore worth of alternative sites' (plots) scam in Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) in which one of the beneficiaries is Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's wife Parvathi. The party also charged that there were attempts to cover up over Rs 180 crore Maharshi Valmiki Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation scam, which forced accounts superintendent P Chandrasekharan to die by suicide.

"The MUDA scam in the Chief Minister's home district Mysuru is much bigger than the scam in the Valmiki Corporation," Vijayendra said before being taken into preventive custody.

Ashoka demanded that the government should hand over the MUDA scam to CBI instead of assigning the case to a panel of IAS officers to probe the matter. He also demanded that the Chief Minister should resign from his position.

> **I refute all allegations of any scam in MUDA site allocation under Congress tenure. Congress would address all allegations comprehensively during the upcoming session**
>
> -DK Shivakumar, Deputy Chief Minister

Malleshwaram MLA CN Ashwathnarayan said, "Siddaramaiah is running the most corrupt government and it is looting the State and its people."

Hubballi-Dharwad West MLA Aravind Bellad asked how can such scandals happen without the knowledge of the Chief Minister.

Dismissing the charge as false, Siddaramaiah rejected the BJP's demand for the CBI probe into the case. "I have already ordered an inquiry. BJP has no moral right to make such demands. Why are they asking us to assign this case to CBI when they did not hand over a single case to the investigation agency during its tenure in the state," he said. *—Salar News/PTI*

The students reported symptoms like stomach pain, vomiting, and diarrhoea *PHOTO: PTI*

33 kids fall ill after eating mid-day meal in Kalaburagi

BENGALURU, 3 JULY

In a tragic incident, 33 children fell ill after consuming mid-day meals at Kanaganahalli Higher Primary School in Chittapur, Kalaburagi district on Wednesday.

The students reported symptoms like stomach pain, vomiting, and diarrhoea shortly after consuming the mid-day meal later it was found to be contaminated with rainwater.

Dr Sharanabasappa Ganajalakhed, district health officer (DHO), confirmed that five severely affected students were admitted to the government hospital in Wadi, while the others received treatment at Kollur Primary Health Centre (PHC). Fortunately, most children recovered quickly and were discharged the same day.

The school authorities and local villagers took the students to hospitals using bikes and tractors as ambulances were not readily available.

This incident marks the second occurrence in the district within three days after a similar event in Jevargi on Saturday.

On Saturday, at least 17 students fell sick after consuming meals at Morarji Desai Girls Residential School in Jewargi taluk marking a second incident of consuming a mid-day meal. *—Salar News*

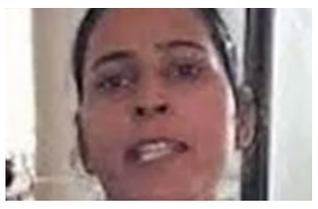
INQUIRY ON

CISF constable who slapped Kangana shifted to City airport

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

CISF constable Kulwinder Kaur, who allegedly slapped actor and BJP MP Kangana Ranaut at the Chandigarh airport last month, has been transferred to a unit in Bengaluru pending a disciplinary inquiry, official sources said on Wednesday.

Kaur was suspended by the central armed police force on 6 June soon after the alleged incident took place when the newly elected MP was travelling to Delhi. A police FIR was also lodged against the constable on a complaint by the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF).



Kulwinder Kaur *PHOTO: PTI*

The sources said Kaur is under suspension and has been posted to the 10th reserve battalion based in the Karnataka capital pending a disciplinary inquiry. She was shifted to the unit soon after the incident in the fair interest of the investigation that is underway, they said. They said the inquiry would take some time, following which an appropriate decision would be taken.

Kaur, who is from Punjab's Kapurthala district, joined the CISF in 2009 and has been with its aviation security group at the Chandigarh airport since 2021.Kaur was apparently upset with Ranaut over her stance on the farmers' protests that took place in the country. *—PTI*

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

Students take part in a rally organised as part of World Environment Day near Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru on Wednesday *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

Police bust fake currency racket in Belagavi, 6 held

BELAGAVI, 3 JULY

The Gokak police have busted a gang involved in the printing and circulation of counterfeit Indian currency notes within the district. In a cinematic heist plot they apprehended six individuals, seizing a total of 6,792 counterfeit notes in denominations of Rs 100 and Rs 500. The arrested individuals are Anwar Muhammad, Salim Yadawad from Arabhavi, Mudalagi taluk, Saddam Musa Yadahalli from Mahalingapur, Ravi Channappa Hagadi, Dundappa Mahadeva Onashenavi and Vitthala Hanumanta Hosakoti.

During interrogation, the accused confessed to exchanging Rs 6 lakh of fake currency for Rs 1 lakh in genuine notes. The police have seized items worth around Rs 5,23,900 in connection with this case. The counterfeit notes were printed and distributed from a house in Arabhavi village of Mudalagi taluk. The investigation revealed that these fake notes were circulated in multiple locations, including Mudhola, Mahalingapur, Gokak, Hidal, Belagavi, and Dharwad.

PHOTO: SALAR

- During interrogation, the accused confessed to exchanging Rs 6 lakh of fake currency for Rs 1 lakh in genuine notes

District Superintendent of Police Bhima Shankar Guleda said, " The items used by the accused in the printing process, including a computer, CPU, printer, screening board, paint, shining stickers, decoying powder, printing paper, cutter blades, six mobile phones, and a white car worth Rs 5,23,900, have been confiscated."

He urged the victims of the counterfeit operation to come forward and file complaints. *—Salar News*

BBMP distributes cloth bags in Russell Market

BENGALURU, 3 JULY

BBMP workers collected plastic bags and distributed paper straws and cloth bags to vendors and shops during an anti-plastic drive on International Plastic Bag Free Day at Russell Market in Shivajinagar on Wednesday.

Under the guidance of Shivaji Nagar MLA, Rizwan Arshad, and Zonal Commissioner Snehal R, the drive was carried out by marshals, link workers, supervisors and the solid waste management team of Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP).

The workers collected plastic bags totalling around 5kg, and distributed 700 paper straws to coconut vendors and 200 cloth bags to the vendors and shops.

Urging them to use cloth bags, the workers warned traders of attracting a fine of Rs 100 if they used plastic bags. They also stuck posters conveying messages about shunning plastic in eateries and other market areas.

Abilash MM, Assistant Executive Engineer, Solid Waste Management, BBMP, said, "We are doing this drive to inform and educate the people on the importance of using cloth bags and paper straws instead of plastic. We are also spreading awareness of dengue.

Before the plastic ban was enforced, traders in the market used to buy 50kg to 70kg of plastic and now it has reduced to 10kg to 20kg. We aim to completely eliminate the use of plastic." *—Salar News*

BBMP collects plastic bags totalling around 5 kg, and distributed 200 cloth bags to the vendors and shops *PHOTO: SALAR*

- BBMP workers collected plastic bags and distributed paper straws and cloth bags to vendors and shops during an anti-plastic drive on International Plastic Bag Free Day at Russell Market in Shivajinagar on Wednesday.

CHILD BODY SEEKS ACTION ON DARSHAN FAN'S PHOTOSHOOT

BENGALURU, 3 JULY

Taking a strong view of a photo of a child on a social media platform dressed like a jail inmate with a prisoner number 6106 -- suggesting Kannada actor Darshan Thoogudeepa, Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (KSCPCR) on Wednesday directed the cybercrime police to take action in the matter. The Commission has also issued a notice to the parents of child. The photo of the baby, with hand-written slip 'Jai D. Boss' pasted next to it, a reference to Darshan. KSCPCR Chairperson K Naganna Gowda said action should be taken against those responsible for sharing the photographs.

"We don't even call children as accused or criminals even when they do something wrong unknowingly. We call them 'children involved in legal fight'. Such effects should not befall on children," Gowda said in his letter. *—Salar News with Agencies*

₹4 CR PROJECT

Tannery Road underpass leads to traffic woes

BENGALURU, 3 JULY

City commuters are facing the brunt of traffic congestion on Tannery Road, Bore Bank Road, CK Garden, Jayamahal and adjoining areas due to the delayed railway underpass project.

The underpass built at the cost of Rs 4 crore, intended to ease traffic congestion around Bengaluru East railway station, has been hit with a major delay in completion. The initial target for the project completion was 31 May and a revised timeline remains unclear, adding to the woes of daily commuters.

Commuters have been forced to take longer, circuitous routes to bypass the construction zone, leading to substantial increases in daily travel times. Speaking to Salar News, everyday commuter Ramesh Kumar P said, "What should be a 35-minute ride has turned into an hour-and-a-half long nightmare. The roads are choked, and the lack of progress on the underpass is extremely frustrating." Sujatha D, another local resident said, "It's like we are stuck in an endless loop of traffic every day. The authorities need to expedite the work as we cannot continue like this."

The initial target for the project completion was 31 May *PHOTO: SALAR*

When asked about the cause for the delay, Ranga Reddy, an engineer from the South Western Railways (SWR) working at the site told Salar News, "The main reason for the delay is the rains that started all of a sudden which is why we could not continue with the laying of the electric lines underground. We will begin the work within this week and will hopefully finish the construction on this side by the end of this month."

When asked about the restrictions for the trains passing on the bridge, Reddy emphasised that the trains are advised to slow down when crossing that stretch.

"Once the construction is completed, we will start the work on the other side of the underpass so that the road is wider for the heavy vehicles to move freely. This will allow free flow of traffic from all the four sides of the junction." Reddy said. *—Salar News*

Chamarajanagar-Hejjala Rly line to be included in Budget

C'NAGAR, 3 JULY

After being confined to discussions and being on paper for over 25 years, the Chamarajanagar-Hejjala railway line is poised for implementation. Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw has assured Union Minister for Steel and Heavy Industries HD Kumaraswamy that the project will be included in the forthcoming Union Budget.

The demand for a railway line from Chamarajanagar to Mettupalayam in Tamil Nadu dates back to the pre-independence era, but environmental concerns stalled the project. Subsequently, the proposal for a railway line between Chamarajanagar and Hejjala on the outskirts of Bengaluru emerged as a feasible alternative, offering a closer route from the district to Tamil Nadu via the State capital.

Chamarajanagar-Hejjala route was included in the list of new railway lines approved by Railways last year, with the official route map published on its website. The new railway line will help residents of Chamarajanagar district to have a direct connection to Bengaluru, bypassing Mysuru and Mandya districts.

If all goes as planned, land acquisition may commence following the budget. The railway line will pass through key areas such as Santemarahalli, Yalandur, and Kollegala, enhancing connectivity for the district's burgeoning industrial sector. The estimated cost for acquiring land totalling around 1,700 acres is Rs 1,500 crore and State government would bear 50 per cent of the cost. Kollegal MLA AR Krishnamurthy said, "This will help in the industrial development of the district and provide a closer connection to the capital city." *—Salar News*

EC sends notice to Rashid over poll expense disparity

SRINAGAR, 3 JULY

Election Commission has sent a notice to newly elected MP Sheikh Abdul Rashid, also known as Engineer Rashid who is in jail in a terror funding case, over a significant disparity in his election expenditure report for the Baramulla Lok Sabha constituency in Jammu and Kashmir. The election authority has asked for a response within two days. The notice was served by the deputy district election officer in Baramulla Tuesday, highlighting the expenditure register submitted by Rashid showed Rs 2.10 lakh, while the actual amount recorded in the shadow register maintained by observers amounted to Rs 13.78 lakh. Rashid, on terror funding charges, has been granted a two-hour custody parole to take oath as a Lok Sabha member on 5 July. *—PTI*

Delhi court extends Kejriwal's custody till 12 July

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

A court on Wednesday extended till 12 July the judicial custody of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in the money laundering case related to the alleged excise policy scam. Kejriwal, who is in jail till 12 July in the CBI case related to the excise policy, appeared before the court of Special Judge Kaveri Baweja through video conference. Delhi High Court on Wednesday said it would hear on 5 July Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's plea seeking bail. Meanwhile, sources said Kejriwal has also challenged a trial court's 1 July case against Kejriwal. *—PTI*

Court extends judicial custody of Sisodia, K Kavitha

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

A court on Wednesday extended till 25 July the judicial custody of AAP leader Manish Sisodia and BRS leader K Kavitha in a money laundering case related to the alleged excise scam. Special Judge Kaveri Baweja extended their custody after they were produced before the court through video conference on the expiry of their judicial custody granted earlier. Delhi's Rouse Avenue court on Wednesday directed the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) to supply copies of the supplementary charge sheet and documents within two days to the accused. An application seeking an exemption from appearance was filed on behalf of Sanjay Singh. Advo Nitesh Rana counsel for Arun Ramchandra Pillai said that three more charge sheets have also been filed. The entire exercise will be started again once we get the copies. Copy are required to see what material has been filed in charge sheet. *—PTI*

Guj CM & French envoy discuss Olympics games

GANDHINAGAR, 3 JULY

France Ambassador to India Thierry Mathou has held a meeting with Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel where both sides discussed ways to utilise the European country's expertise in organising the Olympic Games in the state. India is planning to bid for the 2036 quadrennial multi-sport event. The Olympic Games 2024 will take place in French capital Paris from 26 July to 11 August. Patel here on Tuesday also met New Zealand's High Commissioner to India and Japan's Consul-General based in Mumbai, a government statement said. In the meeting with Mathou, discussions focused on utilising France's expertise in organising the Olympic Games in Gujarat in 2036 if India wins the bid, the statement said. Patel conveyed Gujarat's keen interest in utilising France's knowledge essential for hosting the international multi-sport event. He also wished to explore how this infrastructure could serve long-term purposes beyond the event, the release said. *—PTI*

UP stampede leaves a trail of tears

Families grieve and search for their missing children that killed at least 121 people

HATHRAS, 3 JULY

Satyendra Yadav was walking towards his vehicle after the 'satsang' when his wife called -- their three-year-old son Chhota had died in the stampede that had broken out earlier.

The 29-year-old driver from Delhi had reached here with his family, including his mother and two sisters-in-law. Just before the programme ended, Yadav, along with his mother and elder son, Mayank, 4, started walking towards his vehicle, a three-wheeler loader.

"As we reached my vehicle, I got a call from my wife...she said, 'Pilua thaane aa jaao, Chhota khatam ho gayaa hai' (Come to the Pilua police station, Chhota is no more)," Yadav told PTI.

The three-year-old son of Yadav, Rovin, was affectionately called as Chhota by his family. He was among the 121 people, who died in the stampede here on Tuesday.

Like Rovin, there are more families who lost their children in the tragic incident.

We never thought that such an incident would take place," father of a three-year-old boy, who died in the stampede at a religious congregation, said on Wednesday.

For the brother-sister duo Kaavya, 3 and Ayush, 9, the bus journey from Jaipur, Rajasthan, on Monday evening to the event venue proved to be their last.

"We never thought that such an incident would take place," father of a three-year-old boy, who died in the stampede at a religious congregation here, said on Wednesday.

It's only the poor who meet this fate, not the rich," says Rajkumari Devi as she sits in an ambulance besides the body of her sister-in-law Ruby who died in the Hathras stampede. Rajkumari, who came here along with her husband from Unnao district, is yet to come to terms with the loss and also worried about Ruby's five-year-old son, who is missing. Ruby, 35, and her minor son were among around 60 people who had come for 'satsang' conducted by 'baba' Narayan Hari, who is also known as Saakar Vishwa Hari Bhole Baba. *—PTI*

Relatives mourn near the body of a victim, a day after a stampede that occured during a 'satsang' in Hathras, on Wednesday **PHOTO: PTI**

A large number of police personnel have been deployed outside the ashram of kingpin of the tragedy Bhole Baba, on Wednesday **PHOTO: PTI**

Plea in SC wants expert panel to probe

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

A plea was filed in the Supreme Court on Wednesday seeking the appointment of a five-member expert committee under the supervision of a retired apex court judge to probe the Hathras stampede incident which claimed 121 lives. The plea, filed by advocate Vishal Tiwari, has also sought a direction to the Uttar Pradesh government to submit a status report on the 2 July incident and to initiate legal action against the authorities, officials and others for their negligent conduct. *—PTI*

"Kindly accept the most sincere condolences over the tragic accident in Uttar Pradesh
-Vladimir Putin, President of Russia

"On behalf of the Government of Japan, I pray for the souls of the victims and extend my deepest condolences to the bereaved families.
-Fumio Kishida, Japan Prime Minister

Modi raises WB flogging incident; Oppn walks out

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday called out the Opposition parties for remaining silent on the public flogging of a woman in north Bengal, saying selective politics is a matter of concern.

INDIA bloc parties, led by Congress, staged a walkout of Rajya Sabha on Wednesday after the Leader of the Opposition was not allowed to intervene during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speech.

Police on Wednesday arrested another person for his alleged involvement in the public flogging of a couple in Chopra in West Bengal's Uttar Dinajpur district, an officer said.

A team of officers of Islampur police station arrested Amirul Islam alias Badhua from near the state's international border with Bangladesh on Wednesday morning, the officer said.

Rajnath Singh 'lied' in Parliament: Rahul Gandhi

Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi in a video on X alleged that Defence Minister Rajnath Singh "lied" in Parliament about the issue of compensation to families of martyred Agniveers and demanded an apology for it.

HC dismisses appeal to debar Modi from LS

Delhi High Court Wednesday dismissed an appeal seeking to debar Prime Minister Narendra Modi from Lok Sabha, saying the allegations levelled in the plea are reckless and unsubstantiated.

A bench of Acting Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela said they were in agreement with the single judge who had earlier rejected the petition. "Are you well?" an exasperated bench asked the appellant, adding he needs "medical help".

The plea filed by captain Deepak Kumar alleged that Modi and his accomplices attempted to destabilise national security by planning a fatal crash of an Air India flight in 2018 which the petitioner commanded. *—PTI*

HDK part of Cabinet committee

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

Heavy Industries Minister HD Kumaraswamy was chosen as a member of the crucial Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) as Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday reconstituted eight high-level cabinet panels with ministers from allies reflecting the changed political dynamics after latest Lok Sabha elections. Kumaraswamy is part of the 11-member panel headed by the Prime Minister. *—Salar*

KEEPING UP PROMISES

BJP leader and Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Chaudhary, who had vowed to wear a turban until Nitish Kumar resigned as chief minister of the Mahagathbandhan, removed the headwear on Wednesday, got his head shaved and took a bath in the river Sarayu **PHOTO: PTI**

'We don't trust state', SC blasts Manipur govt in Kuki prisoner's plea

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

"We do not trust the state", an angry Supreme Court said on Wednesday as it fulminated against Manipur government over an undertrial prisoner belonging to the minority Kuki community not being taken to hospital for treatment over safety concerns.

A bench of Justices JB Pardiwala and Ujjal Bhuyan made some strong observations against the state while hearing a plea filed by Lunkhongam Haokip that he was suffering from piles and tuberculosis and was not taken to hospital by jail officials despite having severe backache.

"We do not trust the state... The accused was not taken to hospital because he is from the Kuki community. So sad! We direct him to be examined now.

The counsel for Haokip claimed the jail officials did not pay heed to persistent requests for medical help.

The bench perused an order of the Manipur High Court and found that the undertrial prisoner was not taken to hospital since he was from the Kuki community and "shifting him to a hospital will be hazardous taking into account the law and order situation".

It sought a detailed medical report on or before 15 July and asked the state to bear all the expenses including the treatment cost. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

NEET row: TVK's Vijay backs resolution, DMK ups demand

CHENNAI, 3 JULY

Tamizhaga Vetri Kazhagam (TVK) founder and top Tamil actor Vijay on Wednesday spoke out against NEET, and extended his support to the resolution passed by the Tamil Nadu Assembly against the central qualifying test, seeking exemption to the southern state.

Addressing students at an event organised by him to honour rank holders of classes 10 and 12, the actor-politician also said Education should be brought to the State List.

He claimed students in Tamil Nadu, especially the poor, those from backward and very backward classes in the rural areas have been "badly affected," in their pursuit for medical education following the introduction of the National Entrance-cum-Eligibility Test.

The ruling DMK in Tamil Nadu said the Opposition to NEET is an "all-India issue" now and sounded confident of seeing a "good result," visa-vis its possible abolition, on a day when top Tamil actor Vijay backed an Assembly resolution against the central qualifying test piloted by the government recently.

Meanwhile, BJP state President K Annamalai slammed the DMK for enacting a 'drama' using NEET.

He said BJP has pointed out many "shortcomings" in the report of Justice AK Rajan Committee, appointed by the DMK government on the NEET issue.

He alleged that the committee set up by the DMK government was "not providing details on (enrollment of) government school students in government medical colleges," pre-NEET, despite seeking it repeatedly. *—PTI*

Youth Cong workers shave their heads in Jantar Mantar **PHOTO: X/@IYC**

Actor Vijay **PHOTO: PTI**

MP budget focuses on infra, tribal welfare; no new tax

BHOPAL, 3 JULY

Madhya Pradesh government on Wednesday presented its budget for FY 2024-25 with an outlay of Rs 3.65 lakh crore, marking substantial allocations for infrastructure development and initiatives for women and tribals, amid din by Congress over a nursing college "scam".

Finance Minister Jagdish Devda described the budget as "sarvsparshi" (all-inclusive), announcing no new taxes during its presentation in the state legislative assembly.

The assembly session, however, saw disruptions from Congress members who demanded the resignation of former medical education minister Vishvas Sarang over the nursing college "scam" and sought the setting up of a House committee of members of all parties.

"The budget for the year 2024-25 aims to double its size in the next five years, with increased capital investment in roads, irrigation, electricity, quality health facilities, attracting investments for employment generation, and promoting good governance," Devda stated.

Speaking to reporters, Devda condemned the conduct of the opposition in the House. *—PTI*

Finance Min Jagdish Devda **PHOTO: ANI**

SAYS SPEAKER OM BIRLA

LS session records 103% productivity

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

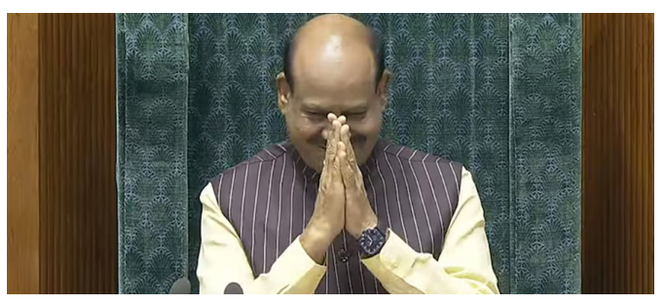
The first session of the 18th Lok Sabha, which was adjourned sine die on Tuesday, recorded a productivity of 103 per cent, Speaker Om Birla said.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla said that a total of 7 sittings were conducted during the session for about 34 hours.

During the Session, 539 newly elected members took the Oath, Birla informed.

The first session also saw the re-election of Om Birla as Speaker and the President's speech.

Birla also informed that 68 members participated in the discussion on the Motion of Thanks on President's Address.



Total of 7 sittings were conducted for about 34 hours **PHOTO: PTI**

"Referring to the election of Lok Sabha Speaker held on 26 June, Birla expressed gratitude for electing him as Speaker for the second time through voice vote," the release said.

On 26 June, Prime Minister Narendra Modi introduced the Council of Ministers to the House, informed Birla.

Lok Sabha Speaker informed the House that the discussion on the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address on 27 June, lasted for more than 18 hours and 68 Members participated in the discussion. In addition, 50 Members laid out their speeches. The discussion concluded with the reply of the Prime Minister on 2 July. Rahul Gandhi's appointment as Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha was announced in the House on 27 June, he further informed.

While a total of 41 matters were taken up under Rule 377, 3 Statements were made under Direction 73A. This apart, 338 papers were laid during the Session, informed Birla.

This was the first session of the 18th Lok Sabha after the results of the Lok Sabha polls earlier this month. The session began on 24 June with oath-taking by the new members. *—ANI*

PHOTO: PTI

Convince farmers to open border: Haryana to Centre

CHANDIGARH, 3 JULY

Haryana Minister Aseem Goel has urged Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan to convince the protesting farmers to open the Shambhu border near Ambala to alleviate the difficulties faced by the people. Goel, the Minister of State for Transport, had met Chouhan in New Delhi on Tuesday. He said the farmers began their protest at Shambhu village on the Haryana-Punjab border a few months ago, resulting in the closure of the border since then. This closure has caused difficulties for the general public, particularly for traders, in conducting their business, Goel, who is the BJP MLA from Ambala City, told Chouhan, according to an official statement issued here. The Haryana minister emphasised that the central government should engage in discussions with the protesting farmers to convince them to open the border. Opening the border will provide relief to the local residents and facilitate easier business operations for traders, he said. *—PTI*

T'gana man hit by train; body found hanging on loco

HYDERABAD, 3 JULY

An unidentified elderly man died after he was hit by a train on the city outskirts and his body was found hanging on the Loco of an empty rake, Government Railway Police (GRP) said on Wednesday. The incident happened on Tuesday between Bibinagar and Ghatkesar and some local TV channels showed a purported video in which the man's body was seen hanging on a moving Loco. The deceased man is aged about 65-70 years, an Investigation Official of the GRP, who visited the scene, said, adding he was hit by an empty rake while he was "trespassing" railway track and died on the spot. A case was registered at RPS Secunderabad. Further investigation including to identify the deceased person, was on. *—PTI*

Professor 'kills' father in front of mother in Odisha

BHUBANESWAR, 3 JULY

In a shocking incident, Anirudha Choudhury, 38, an assistant professor at a private law college here, has been arrested for allegedly murdering his father on Wednesday, police said. The victim, identified as Sunil Choudhury, a retired officer of central PSU Nalco, was fatally stabbed multiple times in the chest and stomach with a knife, Bhubaneswar DCP Prateek Singh said. Anirudh had been residing with his parents in an apartment in Kalarahanga area under Mancheswar police station here following a dispute with his wife. The tragic incident unfolded in the morning in front of his mother, Sunita, police added. Upon receiving information, a PCR van rushed to the scene around 4:30 am and shifted the severely injured victim to Capital Hospital, where doctors pronounced him dead upon arrival, Singh said. *—PTI*

Mephedrone, other drugs of Rs 327 cr seized; 15 held

THANE, 3 JULY

Police on Wednesday claimed to have busted a drug racket spread across four states with the arrest of 15 persons and seizure of mephedrone and raw materials valued at Rs 327.69 crore over the last two months. The mega operation was conducted in Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana and Gujarat since May during which several premises were raided and drug manufacturing units unearthed. *—PTI*

Flood situation remains grim in Arunachal

60,000 people affected in Arunachal Pradesh; Schools shut in Manipur

ITANAGAR, 3 JULY

The flood situation in Arunachal Pradesh remained unchanged on Wednesday, as major rivers continued to surge above the danger mark, officials said.

The ongoing rains and resultant floods and landslides have affected a total of 61,948 people across the state. Four districts - Namsai, Lohit, Changlang, and East Siang - bore the brunt of severe flooding, while other districts witnessed landslides following incessant rains over the past few days, they added.

In Papum Pare district, a cloudburst in Sagalee triggered the release of a significant volume of water from the Pare Hydropower Project (PHEP).

The district administration has cautioned the public to stay away from waterbodies. Taba Gagung Tebw, Assistant General Manager (Technical) of PHEP, urged residents downstream to remain vigilant and avoid riverbanks for fishing in the coming days.

In Bordumsa, under Changlang district, the overflowing Burha Dehing river flooded Bijoypur, Makantong, and Wagun-III and -IV areas, causing damage to bridges, culverts, crops, and livestock. Approximately 300 people have been evacuated to relief camps in the state capital.

People ride their bicycle through a waterlogged road after rains, at Patiapum village in Assam; Road blocked after massive landslide hits Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh; An elderly woman being assisted to cross a waterlogged street, in Morigaon, Manipur **PHOTOS: PTI**

ASSAM FLOOD: 11.5L PEOPLE AFFECTED

Assam continues to grapple with a severe flood crisis, affecting 11.50 lakh people across 23 districts, as the water level of major rivers, including the Brahmaputra and its tributaries, flowing above the danger mark, an official report said. The death toll in this year's floods, landslides and storms has increased to 48. On Tuesday, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma visited Golaghat district following breach of embankments, inspected flood-hit areas, interacted with the suffering population. *—PTI*

PARTS OF MANIPUR FLOODED

Incessant rainfall has caused flooding at several places in Manipur's Imphal West and Imphal East districts, after two major rivers breached embankments, officials said on Wednesday. The state government has declared a holiday for all government offices on Wednesday, while schools will remain closed till Thursday in view of the flood situation, they said. The Imphal river breached its embankment at Singjamei Oinam Thingel in Imphal West, and the Kongba river at Kongba Irong and parts of Keirao in Imphal East, a senior official said. *—PTI*

Odisha to plant mangroves to mitigate cyclone impacts

BERHAMPUR, 3 JULY

Odisha Forest department will plant mangroves in a coastal village in Ganjam district to mitigate cyclone impacts and curb soil erosion, officials said on Wednesday. The plantation drive will be taken up at Purunabandh, a village located near the mouth of river Rushikulya under Khallikote range of Berhampur forest division. Approximately 15,000 mangrove saplings will be planted across a six-hectare area near the village under the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)-funded Enhancing Climate Resilience of India's Coastal Communities (ECRICC) project. *—PTI*

Heatwave grips Kashmir, Srinagar hotter than Kolkata

SRINAGAR, 3 JULY

Kashmir is currently under the grip of a heat wave with day temperatures at various places soaring to record-high, even as some respite is likely ahead this week, officials said on Wednesday.

On Tuesday, Srinagar city, at 34.6 degrees Celsius, was hotter than Kolkata, which registered a maximum temperature of 31 degrees Celsius. The city recorded the season's hottest day on Tuesday. In the last decade, this was the second highest maximum temperature recorded in the month of July, the officials said.

On 18 July, 2021, the city recorded the highest maximum temperature, 35 degrees Celsius, in July in the last decade.

Meanwhile, the maximum temperature recorded on Tuesday at most places in the valley was around five degrees above the normal, the officials said.

Srinagar city's maximum temperature was five degrees above the normal for this time of the year, they said. The officials said the frontier Kupwara town, in north Kashmir, also registered a maximum of 34.6 degrees Celsius on Monday, while Qazigund, in south Kashmir, recorded 34 degrees Celsius.

The valley has been experiencing rising temperatures and scorching heat over the past few weeks, leading to water shortage in many areas. The health department has come with advisories to deal with the heatwave conditions. *—PTI*

MEA raises safety of Indians in Russia

ASTANA, 3 JULY

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Wednesday strongly raised the issue of Indian nationals fighting for the Russian Army in the war zone and pressed for their safe return during a meeting with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov here.

Jaishankar arrived here on Tuesday to represent India at the annual summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

The meeting between the two foreign ministers took place days before Prime Minister Narendra Modi's planned visit to Moscow to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin. While the visit has not been announced officially, it is reported that Modi may visit Moscow next week.

"Good to meet Russian FM Sergey Lavrov in Astana today. Wide-ranging conversation on our bilateral partnership and contemporary issues. Noted the progress in many areas since our last meeting in December 2023," Jaishankar posted on X.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov during a meeting, in Astana on Wednesday **PHOTO: PTI**

Russia's Foreign Ministry too did a similar post on X along with photos from the meeting and hashtag #RussiaIndia: "Lavrov and Foreign Minister of India Subrahmanyam Jaishankar hold talks on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (#SCO) Heads of State Council meeting. Astana, 3 July."

Ever since the Russia-Ukraine war broke out, India has been pressing Russia to ensure the safety and repatriation of its nationals employed by the Russian Army and has taken immediate action on receiving information about "Indians in the war zone."

Jaishankar visited Pushkin Park in Astana on Wednesday, where he paid tribute to the statue of Mahatma Gandhi accompanied by members of the Indian community following his arrival to represent India at the SCO Summit on 4 July. *—PTI*

Another bridge collapses in Bihar, 7th in 15 days

SIWAN, 3 JULY

In a troubling trend for Bihar, a portion of a bridge over Gandaki river in Siwan district collapsed on Wednesday morning, marking the seventh such incident in the state within the past 15 days.

The small bridge, situated in the district's Deoria block, connects several villages with Mahrajganj.

No casualties have been reported so far. This is the second incident of bridge collapse in Siwan in the last 11 days.

Deputy Development Commissioner Mukesh Kumar said the exact cause is under investigation. Senior officials from the block have already reached the site, he added. "A portion of a bridge in Deoria block collapsed this morning. The exact cause is not known so far. Senior officials of the block have reached the spot and I am also going there," he added.

"The incident took place around 5 am. As per initial information, the bridge was constructed in 1982-83. Repair work was going on the bridge for the last few days," Kumar added. Villagers suggested that heavy rainfall over the preceding days may have contributed to the collapse, with a surge in Gandaki river potentially weakening the bridge's structure. This incident follows another bridge collapse in Siwan just 11 days ago, underscoring growing concerns over the state of infrastructure in Bihar. On June 22, a portion of a bridge collapsed in Darounda area. *—PTI*

BNS makes sexual offences gender neutral

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

The newly enacted Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), which replaces the British-era Indian Penal Code, has made sexual offences "gender neutral" for the victim and the perpetrator, according to official documents.

"Both boys and girls could get procured for sexual exploitation. The word 'minor girl' in section 366A of the IPC has been replaced with the word 'child' in clause 96 of BNS to cover both male and female children below the age of 18 years and the offence of procurement has been made punishable," an explanatory note for the new criminal law said.

It said Section 366B in the IPC has been made gender neutral by replacing the phrase "importation of girl from a foreign country" with "importation of girl or boy from a foreign country".

It has been introduced as clause 141 in the BNS to cover the offence of importing into India any girl under the age of 21 years or any boy under the age of 18 years with the intent that such person will be forced or seduced to illicit sexual acts with another person, it said.

The BNS, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA) came into effect on 1 July. They replace the IPC, Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) and the Evidence Act respectively. *—PTI*

Police can now detain person who resists, to stop cognisable offence: BNSS

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

A police officer can detain a person who resists or disregards lawful directions to prevent a cognisable offence, according to the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) which came into effect on Monday.

The BNSS, which replaced the British-era Code of Criminal Procedure, has introduced "a new insertion" as Clause 172 in 'Preventive Action of the Police'.

It states that people must conform to directions of the police issued in the course of preventing the commission of a cognizable offence, officials said. The provision allows a police officer to detain such person and produce them before a magistrate or, in petty cases, release the person as soon as possible within 24 hours, they said.

Police officials have been given a layer of immunity in cases of dereliction in carrying out duties on the orders of an executive magistrate to disperse unlawful assembly. In such cases, police officers cannot be prosecuted without the sanction of the government. *—PTI*

HC order limiting period of bail is incorrect: SC

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

Supreme Court has termed as "incorrect" an order of the Orissa High Court which limited the period of bail granted to an accused in a case lodged under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act to two months.

The bench, while referring to a verdict passed earlier by the top court, said it is now well settled that the right to speedy trial is recognised as a fundamental right guaranteed by the Constitution and is closely tied to the right to life and personal liberty. A vacation bench of Justices JB Pardiwala and Ujjal Bhuyan noted that the petitioner had filed a bail application in the high court which had taken notice of the fact that the petitioner was in custody since May 11, 2022 and only one witness was examined so far. "In such circumstances, the high court thought it fit to order release of the petitioner on bail but only for a period of two months," it noted.

PHOTO: PTI

"If High Court was of the view that the right of the petitioner to have a speedy trial could be said to have been infringed, then the high court should have ordered release of the petitioner on bail pending final disposal of the trial itself," the apex court said in its 1 July order. *—PTI*

7 more children from Indore shelter home hospitalised

INDORE, 3 JULY

- The number of such children admitted to the hospital has risen to 38

Seven more children suffering from suspected food poisoning at a shelter home in Madhya Pradesh's Indore city have been admitted to a government hospital, an official said on Wednesday.

With this, the number of such children admitted to the hospital has risen to 38, he said.

As many as 204 children, including orphans and those suffering from mental ailments, had been housed at the Shri Yugpurush Dham Bal Ashram, located in Malharganj police station area here, an official earlier said.

Five children died there over the last three days while 38 others have so far been hospitalised, prompting the Madhya Pradesh government to order a high-level inquiry.

District Collector Ashish Singh said four children died on Monday and Tuesday due to infection caused by suspected food poisoning, while another child died on Sunday after suffering from seizures.

Out of the 38 children brought to the hospital, four were admitted in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) though their condition was improving, he said. *—PTI*

1ST IN KERALA SCHOOL

Kerala schools get 'sports manual' for spl-abled

T'PURAM, 3 JULY

The Kerala General Education Department has designed an unique "inclusive sports manual" with the objective of promoting the sports talents of differently-abled schoolchildren and ensuring their participation in the field.

State General Education Minister V Sivankutty said that it is the first time that such a document is being designed in the country. "Steps are being taken to conduct competitions as part of the manual this year itself," he said while addressing a press conference here on Wednesday.

The minister was elaborating on various academic and non-academic programmes being implemented by the department in the ongoing academic year. Another programme, titled "Healthy Kids," envisaged to ensure the physical and mental health of children by initiating them to sports and games, would be implemented for primary students of the state-run schools, he said.

Kerala Education Minister V Sivankutty elaborates different programmes being implemented in the ongoing academic year **PHOTO: PTI**

Designed by the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), he said the programme was already approved by the curriculum committee, and two books have been prepared as part of it. Seeking to support autistic children, Model Autism Complexes would be set up in all 14 districts of the state by spending Rs 37.80 crore, the minister detailed. A total of Rs 121.21 crore-worth of projects would be implemented as part of the "inclusive education" programme envisaged for differently-abled children, Sivankutty said. *—PTI*

THE GROUND CALLS

Boys play football in a waterlogged field during rains, in Nadia, West Bengal on Wednesday
PHOTO: PTI

Hathras stampede: Mishandling to blame?

A catastrophe involving large crowds at a religious gathering in northern India yesterday resulted in the deaths of over 100 people, with many more injured.

The disaster, in the Hathras district southeast of the capital New Delhi, unfolded during a Satsang (spiritual discourse) by a popular preacher which drew thousands of devotees.

This is the latest in a long list of crowd disasters in India.

Although much of the media coverage has described this event as a crowd "stampede", this obscures failings in how the event was planned and run.

Belongings of followers of Bhole Baba lying at the scene a day after a massive stampede that took place during a 'satsang' in Hathras ***PHOTO: PTI***

India has seen many such catastrophes

In recent history, India has witnessed several tragic crowd-related catastrophes.

On 1 January 2022, a disaster at the Mata Vaishno Devi shrine in Jammu and Kashmir resulted in 12 deaths and 15 injuries. The incident was triggered by an argument among pilgrims during New Year celebrations.

On 28 December 2022, a stampede at a political rally in Andhra Pradesh state in India's south led to eight deaths as supporters surged towards the stage.

On 25 November 2023, a crowd incident at a university concert in Kerala in India's south caused four deaths and numerous injuries.

In 1954, millions gathered for a religious pilgrimage at the Prayag Kumbh Mela in northern India, resulting in a crowd disaster that claimed around 800 lives. This incident remains the deadliest crowd disaster in India's history.

A global database of deaths from crowd accidents shows more than 1,477 people have lost their lives since 2,000 in over 50 disastrous mass gatherings in India (excluding the very recent incident).

India remains one of the biggest hotspots for deadly crowd accidents in the world, particularly over the past two decades. Other major hotspots include Saudi Arabia, mainly due to incidents during the annual Hajj pilgrimage, and some parts of West Africa.

A sobering trend of crowd disasters

A look back at the history of crowd accidents reveals a noteworthy and sobering trend.

In the 1980s, most crowd accident deaths occurred at sporting events. However, nowadays, most happen at religious gatherings, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.

High-profile examples, such as the UK's Hillsborough stadium disaster in 1989, led to the development of crowd management guides, better practices, and heightened awareness in sport arenas, especially in Europe. These measures have made sporting events significantly safer for crowds. But there haven't been similar improvements for religious gatherings.

Today, for ticketed large events there's usually extensive risk assessment, planning and operational control. Organisers can monitor and spot the risk as it unfolds and take real-time actions. Planning includes computer modelling of the event in terms of crowd movement, estimating evacuation times, and monitoring how people enter and leave the premises, among other factors.

However, these steps are not necessarily taken with religious mass gatherings.

Exits can be overwhelmed

Media reports indicate the venue where the recent tragedy took place was three times over its capacity.

A crowd that gathers gradually over an extended period of time during such an event would want to exit the venue all at once at the end. This means exits are grossly insufficient.

This simple inadequacy of exit capacities relative to the size of the crowd appears to be one of the main causes of the recent tragedy in India.

In many cases, the sheer pressure of the crowd at narrow exit points can lead to suffocation, which was reported with this latest tragic event. Clearly, individuals with smaller body sizes and shorter heights are at higher risk. This is reflected in the large number of women and children reported as casualties.

It's not a crowd 'stampede'

The media has used the word "stampede" to describe such events. This is often a blanket term to describe crowd accidents, often regardless of the underlying cause.

But using terms like this has implications. It essentially puts the blame on the people involved in the incident and on the way they behaved. In fact, crowd behaviour is often not the main cause of such incidents.

Perpetuating this narrative often allows organisers to be absolved of responsibility and demotivates authorities from investigating the root cause of the problem.

This leads to a vicious cycle of accidents occurring without any practical measures implemented to prevent the next one. One member of India's parliament told The New York Times. Every year, these kinds of incidents keep repeating themselves, and we learn nothing.

We need to learn from past events

Crowd accidents, particularly at religious mass gatherings in developing countries, are becoming a more common cause of premature death worldwide.

In recent weeks, more than 1,300 pilgrims died during the Hajj. The recent incident in India soon followed.

While the number of deaths at the Hajj is higher, the mortality rate at the recent Indian gathering is significantly higher (we've calculated this at 0.065 per cent for the Hajj versus 0.77 per cent for the Indian incident). This calls for rigorous regulation, proper risk assessment, planning, security provision and crowd monitoring. Targeted, evidence-based public education campaigns can raise awareness and significantly reduce the likelihood and impact of such events. Just as we pursue zero deaths on the roads, crowd accident deaths should be recognised as a preventable cause that needs addressing, especially in developing countries.

—Courtesy, The Conversation

SALAR ساڈا

3% more babies have low birth weight after Covid

Over two lakh infants were analysed, of which 12,000 were born during the pandemic ***PHOTO: PTI***

Amidst the Covid-19 pandemic, number of babies in India born with a low birth weight rose sharply -- by about three per cent, a new study has found.

Babies born during the pandemic were also found to be at double the risk of having a low weight at birth. The increase in babies born with a low weight could impact the development of "human capital" in the long term, as these infants are known to often "struggle with school", corresponding author Santosh Kumar, an associate professor of development and global health economics at the University of Notre Dame, US, said.

"Children who have lower birth weight as infants often go on to struggle with school and this limits their capacity to develop what economists often call 'human capital' -- the key knowledge and skills that will affect their ability to earn a good living and support themselves and their families," Kumar said.

Roughly one in every four babies (3 crore) around the world are born with a low weight, which the World Health Organization (WHO) defines as being less than 2.5 kilograms.

About 95 per cent of these babies are born in low- and middle-income countries, with around half being born in South Asia, according to the authors of the study published in the journal Communications Medicine.

In this study, the researchers found that babies born between April 2020 and April 2021 weighed less than the WHO-defined limit, compared to those born before the pandemic.

> About 95 per cent of these babies are born in low- and middle-income countries, with around half being born in South Asia, according to the authors of the study published in the journal Communications Medicine

Over two lakh infants were analysed, of which 12,000 were born during the pandemic and about 1,92,000 born pre-pandemic. Data was taken from the fifth round of the Indian National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), conducted during 2019-2021.

"The low birth weight prevalence rate (among babies) is 20 per cent in the pandemic cohort and 17 per cent in the pre-pandemic cohort," the authors wrote in the study, which they claimed is the first one to look at how the pandemic affected birth outcomes in India using a nationally representative sample.

On average, birth weights during the pandemic years were found to be lowered by 11 grams. The authors also found that babies born during the pandemic were at double the risk of having a low birth weight compared to those born pre-pandemic.

While a significant number of pandemic-affected children were observed in rural areas and socially disadvantaged communities, the researchers found that a large number of babies from the richest households were also impacted.

Multiple factors related to the pandemic, including Covid-causing SARS-CoV-2 virus, stress related to social distancing, economic upheaval and the disruption of maternal and neonatal care, may have affected the health behaviours of pregnant women and contributed to lower birth weights, Kumar said. *—PTI*

the researchers found that babies born between April 2020 and April 2021 weighed less than the WHO-defined limit, compared to those born before the pandemic ***PHOTO: MEDICAL.NET***

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Sunak battles to the end as Labour's Starmer eyes victory

Rishi Sunak has covered thousands of miles in the past few weeks, but he hasn't outrun the expectation that his time as Britain's prime minister is in its final hours.

United Kingdom voters will cast ballots in a national election Thursday, passing judgment on Sunak's 20 months in office, and on the four Conservative prime ministers before him. They are widely expected to do something they have not done since 2005: Elect a Labour Party government.

During a hectic final two days of campaigning that saw him visit a food distribution warehouse, a supermarket, a farm and more, Sunak insisted "the outcome of this election is not a foregone conclusion."

"People can see that we have turned a corner," said the Conservative leader, who has been in office since October 2022. "It has been a difficult few years, but undeniably things are in a better place now than they were."

Labour also is warning against taking the election result for granted, imploring supporters not to grow complacent about polls that have given the party a solid double-digit lead since before the campaign began.

Labour leader Keir Starmer has spent the six-week campaign urging voters to take a chance on his centre-left party and vote for change. Most people, including analysts and politicians, expect they will. Labour has not set pulses racing with its pledges to get the sluggish economy growing, invest in infrastructure and make Britain a "clean energy superpower."

But nothing has really gone wrong, either. The party has won the support of large chunks of the business community and endorsements from traditionally conservative newspapers including the Rupert Murdoch-owned Sunday Times.

Former Labour candidate Douglas Beattie, author of the book "How Labour Wins (and Why it Loses)," said Starmer's "quiet stability probably chimes with the mood of the country right now."

"The country is looking for fresh ideas, moving away from government that's exhausted and divided," Beattie said. "So Labour are pushing at an open door." The Conservatives, meanwhile, have been plagued by gaffes. The campaign got off to an inauspicious start when rain drenched Sunak as he made the announcement outside 10 Downing St. on 22 May. Then on 6 June, Sunak went home early from commemorations in France marking the 80th anniversary of the D-Day invasion, missing a ceremony alongside United States President Joe Biden and France's Emmanuel Macron.

Labour also is warning against taking the election result for granted, imploring supporters not to grow complacent about polls that have given the party a solid double-digit lead since before the campaign began ***PHOTO: PTI***

Several Conservatives close to Sunak are being investigated by the gambling regulator over suspicions they used inside information to place bets on the date of the election before it was announced.

It has all made it harder for Sunak to shake off the taint of political chaos and mismanagement that's gathered around the Conservatives since former Prime Minister Boris Johnson and his staff held lockdown-breaching parties during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Johnson's successor, Liz Truss, rocked the Covid-weakened economy with a package of drastic tax cuts, making a cost-of-living crisis worse, and lasted just 49 days in office. There is widespread dissatisfaction over a host of issues, from a dysfunctional public health care system to crumbling infrastructure.

But for many voters, the lack of trust applies not just to Conservatives, but to politicians in general. Veteran rouser of the right, Nigel Farage, has leapt into that breach with his Reform UK party and grabbed headlines, and voters' attention, with his anti-immigration rhetoric.

The centrist Liberal Democrats and environmentalist Green Party also want to sweep up disaffected voters from the bigger parties.

Across the country, voters say they want change but aren't optimistic it will come. "I don't know who's for me as a working person," said Michelle Bird, a port worker in Southampton on England's south coast who was undecided about whether to vote Labour or Conservative. "I don't know whether it's the devil you know or the devil you don't."

Conner Filsell, a young office worker in the London suburbs, would like a roof of his own.

"I still live at home. I would love to be able to have my own place, but the way things are going it's just not on the cards," he said.

Lise Butler, senior lecturer in modern history at City University of London, said that signs point to this being "a change election in which the Conservatives are punished." But she said that if Starmer wins, "the years to come ... may be challenging."

"He'll probably be facing constant attacks on various grounds from left and right," she said. "So I think that while the outcome of this election is pretty clear, I think all bets are off in terms of what, what Labor's support is going to look like over the next few years." Starmer has agreed that his biggest challenge is "the mindset in some voters that everything's broken, nothing can be fixed." "And secondly, a sense of mistrust in politics because of so many promises having been made over the last 14 years which weren't carried through," he told broadcaster ITV on Tuesday. "We have to reach in and turn that around."

Many election experts expect a low turnout, below the 67 per cent recorded in 2019. Yet this election may bring a scale of change Britain has not seen for decades if it delivers a big Labour majority and a diminished Conservative Party.

In Moreton-in-Marsh, a pretty town of honey-coloured stone buildings in western England's Cotswold hills, 25-year-old Evie Smith-Lomas was relishing the chance to eject the area's long-standing Conservative lawmaker.

"This has been a Tory seat forever, for 32 years, longer than I've been alive," she said. "I'm excited at the prospect of someone new. I mean I think 32 years in any job is too long. You surely have run out of ideas by now." *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Employer arrested for Indian worker's death in Italy

ROME, 3 JULY

Italian police have arrested the owner of the agriculture company Antonello Lovato, who dumped a 31-year-old Indian worker on the road without medical assistance after his arm was severed by heavy farm machinery, causing his death, a tragic incident that shocked the country and its leadership. Satnam Singh was abandoned by his employer after a strawberry wrapping machine severed his arm in Lazio, near Rome, last month and died due to "copious bleeding", the ANSA news agency reported. The Sikh casual farm labourer died in a hospital in Rome two days later after being airlifted there when he was eventually found. Police on Tuesday arrested Lovato, on suspicion of causing Singh's manslaughter death, the report said. *—AP*

Indian-origin conwoman jailed in Singapore

SINGAPORE, 3 JULY

A 33-year-old Indian-origin Singaporean woman on Wednesday was sentenced to three years of imprisonment for cheating 12 people of over SGD 106,000 in total in various scams. District Judge John Ng also imposed a fine of SGD 2,000 on Priscilla Shamani Manoharan, who started her crime spree in 2022. Manoharan cheated a man of SGD 57,250 by making claims such as needing to pay for a transaction relating to an apartment under the public scheme of the Housing Board, and that her daughter had died, followed by her son. She also conned by faking her death, pretending to be a lawyer and sending out bogus invoices for "outstanding legal fees" to the man, The Straits Times newspaper reported. *—AP*

New platform for Indians to find internships in US

NEW YORK, 3 JULY

The Indian Consulate in New York has launched a new platform for Indian students to find internship opportunities in the US. The newly launched portal can be accessed by students to directly apply to the companies according to details provided in it. "As part of the initiative to support Indian students in its jurisdiction, @IndiainNew York has developed a platform for Indian Students to find internship opportunities at companies in the USA," the Indian Consulate in New York wrote on X. For the third year in a row, a record number of Indian students travelled to the United States to pursue higher education, the US Embassy in India revealed in a release in November last year. *—ANI*

Missing Indonesian woman found inside python

MAKASSAR, 3 JULY

A woman has been horrifically killed by a 30 foot python - with her husband finding her head-first in its mouth on Tuesday. The victim Siriati, 30, was walking alone through the Indonesian jungle when the beast reptile pounced on her. The victim's husband found her being eaten head-first by the beast. The python reportedly coiled around her and crushed her to death before swallowing her. Her husband, Adiansya, 30, found her being eaten head-first by the snake as her legs stuck out the beast's mouth. Siriati, a mother-of-five, was on her way to meet her brother to go to the market in Luwu Regency, South Sulawesi, on Tuesday morning. Locals raised the alarm and Siriati's body was recovered, later buried the next morning in the village of Siteba. ***—Courtesy, The Sun***

US to provide $2.3B in new aid for Ukraine

New package will provide new air defence interceptors and other critical munitions

WASHINGTON, DC , 3 JULY

The United States will soon announce more than USD 2.3 billion in military aid for Ukraine, US Defence Secretary Llyod Austin said, as reported by CNN.

The Defence Secretary said that this new package will provide new air defence interceptors and other critical munitions from US inventories.

"This package under presidential drawdown authority will provide new air defence interceptors, anti-tank weapons, and other critical munitions from US inventories," Austin said in a meeting with Ukrainian Defense Minister Rustem Umerov.

"It will also enable the United States to procure more Patriot and NASAMs air defence interceptors, which will be provided on an accelerated timeline by the resequencing of deliveries for some foreign military sales," Austin added.

However, it is unclear how much of the total USD 2.3 billion would be under the Presidential Drawdown Authority (PDA), which pulls equipment from US stocks, or under the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative (USAI), allowing the US to purchase equipment and systems from the US Defence Industry.

- The US recently moved Ukraine to the top of the list to receive air defence capabilities, putting it ahead of other countries that may have already been in line to receive them

US Defence Secretary Llyod Austin *PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA*

Notably, the US has been announcing regular packages for Ukraine since Congress passed legislation that approved nearly USD 61 billion in Ukraine aid earlier this year.

The US recently moved Ukraine to the top of the list to receive air defence capabilities, putting it ahead of other countries that may have already been in line to receive them.

During that time, a White House official told CNN in private discussions, "many of these countries have understood and appreciated the necessity of this decision."

This announcement comes weeks after the US and Ukraine signed a long-term bilateral security pact that commits the US to 10 years of training Ukraine's armed forces, providing military assistance and increasing intelligence sharing, CNN reported.

Additionally, it also comes one week before the NATO summit scheduled to be held in Washington, DC.

"Hopefully soon, Ukraine will receive its invitation," Umerov said of NATO. *—ANI*

HURRICANE BERYL

Hurricane Beryl roared through open waters as a powerful Category 4 storm heading toward Jamaica after killing at least six people causing significant damage in the southeast Caribbean *PHOTO: SCREENGRAB*

Taiwan accuses China of meddling in polls

TAIPEI, 3 JULY

Taiwan's National Security Bureau (NSB) and Ministry of Culture (MOC) accused China that it is attempting to interfere in Taiwan's democratic processes, including influencing elections and interfering with media, Taiwan News reported on Wednesday.

NSB said China was inviting local politicians intending to influence elections, MOC said it would present a report on the alleged attempts by Chinese reporters to interfere with Taiwan's media, reports said.

Officials from the Mainland Affairs Council, NSB, MOC, and Ministry of Justice Investigation Bureau will present a report to the Legislative Yuan by 4 July, detailing their findings on China's alleged interference in Taiwan's elections and media.

The methods used by China included underground financial institutions demanding confidential military data as a form of debt repayment by military officers, as per Taiwan News.

At election time, Beijing funded trips by local politicians to China in an attempt to influence voting behaviour, while also spreading reports about measures supposedly favouring Taiwan businesses.

The NSB reports that prosecutors have filed 39 indictments in 84 cases over the past year, indicating a rising trend in challenges to Taiwan's national security.

According to the report, the alleged interference by Chinese journalists posted in Taiwan on TV talk shows was the subject of an investigation by the MOC.

Seven Chinese media companies had stationed a total of 10 correspondents in Taiwan. The probe focused on a former reporter for China's state-run Xinhua News Agency who was accused of involvement in the production of a TV show. *—ANI*

Taiwan demands immediate release of 6 held by China

TAIPEI, 3 JULY

Taiwan's Coast Guard Administration (CGA) is calling on China to explain why it seized a Taiwanese fishing vessel, the Da Jin Man No 88, demanding to immediately release the vessel and its six crew members, Taiwan News reported on Wednesday.

A vessel registered in Penghu named Da Jin Man No 88 was boarded and seized by the Chinese coast guard on 2 July. The ship was reportedly boarded about 20 km from a port in Fujian Province's Jinjiang County in response to a summer fishing ban. The CGA said two Taiwanese and three Indonesians were on board. CGA Deputy Director-General Hsieh Ching-chin stated that the agency received a report from the owner of a Taiwanese fishing boat that it had been intercepted by two Chinese coast guard vessels 43.89 km northeast of Liaoluo Port in Kinmen. *—ANI*

Kamala likely to retain White House: CNN

WASHINGTON, 3 JULY

Vice President Kamala Harris, who is of Indian and African heritage, has a better chance of retaining the White House in the US presidential polls than her boss Joe Biden, according to the latest CNN poll.

The approval rating of President Biden, 81, has plummeted after his dismal debate performance in Atlanta last week against his predecessor and Republican rival Donald Trump.

Since the debate, there have been increasing voices in the ruling Democratic Party for Biden, the oldest sitting US President, to step down and let someone else run the race for the crucial 5 November presidential elections.

The poll also finds Harris, 59, within striking distance of Trump in a hypothetical matchup: 47 per cent of registered voters support Trump, 45 per cent back Harris, a result within the margin of error that suggests there is no clear leader under such a scenario.

Kamala Harris *PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA*

"Harris' slightly stronger showing against Trump rests at least in part on broader support from women (50 per cent of female voters back Harris over Trump vs. 44 per cent for Biden against Trump) and independents (43 per cent Harris vs. 34 per cent Biden)," the polls said.

- Former First Lady Michelle Obama, 60, leads Trump by a whopping 11 points in an Ipsos poll—50 per cent to 39 per cent

White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre refrained from directly commenting on the polls.

Former First Lady Michelle Obama, 60, leads Trump by a whopping 11 points in an Ipsos poll—50 per cent to 39 per cent — though her office told NBC News in March she would not be running for president this year. *—AP*

Prez debate: Biden admits 'was not smart'

US President Joe Biden has admitted that he "almost fell asleep on stage" and "was not very smart" enough to handle his schedule before the first presidential debate with Donald Trump. Biden, stumbled in his first televised presidential debate with his predecessor Trump. *—AP*

UK elections to deliver more British Indian MPs

LONDON, 3 JULY

The UK general election on Thursday is expected to deliver the most diverse Parliament in the country's history, including in the number of parliamentarians of Indian heritage likely to be elected from across the nation.

According to an analysis by the British Future think tank, the Labour Party is set to have by far the largest number of ethnic minority MPs if the party wins an overall majority and even more in a landslide scenario.

With around 14 per cent of MPs coming from an ethnic minority background this time, the analysis finds that the new Parliament will be closer than ever to reflecting the diversity of the British electorate.

"This election will see the biggest rise in ethnic minority representation and the most diverse Parliament ever," said Sunder Katwala, Director of British Future.

"In the space of 40 years, we'll have gone from zero to one in seven MPs being from an ethnic minority background," he said. The last general election in 2019 resulted in 15 MPs of Indian heritage crossing over the line, many of whom are contesting again alongside several first-timers.

Conservative Party MP Alok Sharma and Labour veteran Virendra Sharma are among the most high-profile British Indians not seeking re-election this time, from Reading West and Ealing Southall, respectively. *—AP*

Nepali Cong asks PM to quit pave way for new govt

KATHMANDU, 3 JULY

Nepali Congress president Sher Bahadur Deuba Wednesday asked Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' to step down and pave the way for the formation of a new government after the Himalayan nation's two largest political parties struck a power-sharing deal to oust the former guerrilla leader.

"The Prime Minister should resign after the largest parties NC and UML said that they would form a new government together," Deuba told reporters after a crucial meeting of the party at his residence at Budhanilkantha on the outskirts of Kathmandu.

Deuba, 78, and Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) chairman K P Sharma Oli, 72, - both former premiers - inked a power-sharing deal Monday night to form a new government. They agreed to share the Prime Ministerial position on a rotation basis for the rest of the term of the Parliament.

Nepali Congress, the largest party has 89 seats at present, while CPN-UML has 78 seats. Their combined strength of 167 is sufficient for a majority of 138 seats in the lower house. Prachanda's party has 32 seats. A senior leader of CPN-UML indicated that all the ministers of the CPN-UML will resign en masse to put pressure on Prachanda to step down. *—PTI*

French citizen pleads guilty to espionage charges in Russia

Laurent Vinatier *PHOTO: LINKEDIN/ VLADIMIR GERDO*

MOSCOW, 3 JULY

A French citizen arrested in Russia has pleaded guilty to criminal charges involving illegally collecting information on military issues in the country, state news agency Tass reported Wednesday.

Laurent Vinatier was arrested in the Russian capital in June as tensions flared between Moscow and Paris following French President Emmanuel Macron's comments about the possibility of deploying French troops in Ukraine.

Russian authorities accused Vinatier of failing to register as a "foreign agent" while collecting information about Russia's "military and military-technical activities," which could be used to the detriment of the country's security.

They did not provide details of the accusations beyond alleging that Vinatier repeatedly travelled to Russia to collect information. Under Russian law, the criminal offense is punishable by up to five years in prison.

Russia's Investigative Committee said Wednesday that it questioned seven witnesses "with whom the accused held meetings to collect information in the field of military and military-technical activities," Tass reported. *—AP*

Imran Khan *PHOTO: ANI*

IMRAN ACQUITTED IN PROTEST LINKED TO TOSHAKHANA

ISLAMABAD, 3 JULY

A Pakistani court on Wednesday acquitted former prime minister Imran Khan and several senior party colleagues in a case registered against them for protesting against the jailed premier's disqualification by the election commission in the Toshakhana corruption case.

Other leaders who have been exonerated in the case by the district and sessions court here are Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Sheikh Rasheed, Asad Qaiser, Shehryar Afridi, Faisal Javed, Raja Khurram Nawaz and Ali Nawaz Awan.

Judicial Magistrate Yasir Mehmood pronounced the verdict, which was reserved last week on the petitions seeking acquittal, during the hearing on Wednesday, the Geo News reported. The case was registered against the 71-year-old Khan and other politicians at Aabpara Police Station for protesting against the Election Commission of Pakistan's Toshakhana corruption verdict in 2022, which disqualified him from holding office for a limited time.

The Toshakhana is a department under the administrative control of the Cabinet Division and stores precious gifts given to rulers, parliamentarians. *—PTI*

LANDMARK RULE

Japan top court says forced sterilisation unconstitutional

TOKYO, 3 JULY

Japan's top court has ruled as unconstitutional a defunct eugenics law which saw 16,500 disabled people forcibly sterilised between the 1950s and 1990s.

The Supreme Court also ordered the government to pay damages to 11 victims, who were involved in five cases that were heard on appeal.

Wednesday's landmark ruling brings to an end a decades-long fight for justice by victims who have been demanding compensation and an apology.After years of lawsuits, a 2019 law finally granted the surviving victims damages but some have continued to fight for higher compensation.

Japan's government acknowledged that 16,500 of the sterilisation operations were performed without consent *PHOTO: X@LATESTNEWSCO*

In four of the cases brought to the court, the Central government had appealed against the lower courts' compensation orders.

Japan's government acknowledged that 16,500 of the sterilisation operations were performed without consent. *—BBC NEWS*

Mumbai terror accused extraditable to India: US

WASHINGTON, 3 JULY

Tahawwur Rana *PHOTO: ANI*

Pakistani-origin Canadian businessman Tahawwur Rana, who is sought in India for his involvement in the 2008 Mumbai terror attack, is extraditable under the plain provisions of the US-India extradition treaty, a US attorney has told a federal court.

Assistant US Attorney, Criminal Appeals Chief Bram Alden was making a closing argument before the US Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, where Rana has appealed against the order by a US District Court in California that denied the writ of habeas corpus.

In May, Rana, 63, had filed a writ of habeas corpus challenging the court order, which acceded with the request of the US government that the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks accused be extradited to India.

Rana, currently lodged in a jail in Los Angeles, faces charges for his role in the Mumbai attacks and is known to be associated with Pakistani-American terrorist David Coleman Headley, one of the main conspirators of the 26/11 Mumbai attacks. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Gold rises ₹50; silver jumps ₹300

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

Gold prices rose Rs 50 to Rs 72,550 per 10 grams in the national capital on Wednesday in line with firm trends in the international markets, according to HDFC Securities. The precious metal had closed at Rs 72,500 per 10 grams in the previous session. Additionally, silver prices also jumped Rs 300 to Rs 91,300 per kg. It had settled at Rs 91,000 per kg in the previous session. The yellow metal traded at Rs 74,650 per 10 grams in local markets in the national capital, marketmen said. Silver traded at Rs 92,300 per kg. In the global markets, spot gold at Comex was trading at USD 2,339 per ounce, slightly up USD 4 from the previous close. In addition, silver also quoted higher at USD 29.80 per ounce. It ended at USD 29.50 in previous session. *—PTI*

Rupee falls 4 paise to close at 83.52 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 3 JULY

The rupee depreciated 4 paise to settle at 83.52 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday, weighed down by elevated crude oil prices. Forex traders said the Indian rupee depreciated on strength in crude oil prices, which touched a two-week high on Tuesday. However, a firm tone in domestic markets and favourable macroeconomic data cushioned the downside. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.51 and hit the intraday high of 83.49 and a low of 83.56 against the American currency during the session. It finally settled at 83.52 (provisional) against the dollar, 4 paise lower than its previous close. On Tuesday, the rupee depreciated 4 paise to settle at 83.48 against the US dollar. *—PTI*

Federal Bank records 20% loan growth in Q1

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

Private sector lender Federal Bank on Wednesday reported a 20 per cent growth in advances at Rs 2,24,139 crore for the first quarter ended 30 June. Total advances stood at Rs 1,86,593 crore at the end of the first quarter of the last financial year, Federal Bank said in a regulatory filing. As per internal classification, retail credit book grew by 25 per cent and wholesale credit book grew by 14 per cent, it said, adding, retail-to-wholesale ratio stood at 56:44 respectively. The bank's deposits also rose by 20 per cent year-on-year to Rs 2,66,082 crore in the quarter, from Rs 2,22,496 crore in the same period a year ago, it said. *—PTI*

Energy firm ACME Solar files papers for ₹3,000cr IPO

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

Renewable energy firm ACME Solar Holdings Ltd has filed preliminary papers with capital markets regulator Sebi to raise Rs 3,000 crore through an initial public offering (IPO). The Gurugram-based company's proposed IPO is a combination of fresh issue of shares worth Rs 2,000 crore and an offer for sale (OFS) of shares valued Rs 1,000 crore by ACME Cleantech Solutions, according to the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP). The offer also includes a reservation for a subscription by eligible employees. ACME Solar develops, builds, owns, operates, and maintains utility-scale renewable energy projects through its in-house engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) division. It generates revenue by selling electricity to various off-takers, including central and state-backed entities. *—PTI*

Koo app shuts down after acquisition talks fail

Koo was launched as a Twitter/X alternative in 2020 PHOTO: KOO

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

Social media platform Koo, which had pitched itself as a rival and viable alternate to Twitter (now X), is shutting down with co-founders on Wednesday penning a heartfelt note about tough decisions and little yellow bird bidding "final goodbye".

In a post on LinkedIn, co-founders Aprameya Radhakrishna and Mayank Bidawatka announced that the platform will be discontinuing its services to the public, as talks for a partnership with multiple larger internet companies, conglomerates and media houses did not yield the desired outcomes.

"We explored partnership with multiple larger internet companies, conglomerates and media houses but these talks didn't yield the outcome we wanted," not said.

The duo said that although they would have liked to keep the app running, "the cost of technology services to keep social media app running is high and we've had to take this tough decision".

Koo at its peak grossed about 2.1 million daily active users, about 10 million monthly active users, and over 9,000 VIPs that included some of the most prominent personalities from various fields.

A funding winter, however hit the company at its peak, hurting plans and forcing the platform to "tone down" its growth trajectory.

"Unfortunately for us, the mood of the market and the funding winter got better of us," the note mentioned as the founders signed off saying, "the little yellow bird says its final goodbye" in a reference to Koo's yellow bird logo.

It may be recalled that Koo's popularity in India peaked around 2021 amid the Indian government's spat with Twitter (now X) and growing calls for expanding the ecosystem of homegrown digital platforms.

At its peak, Koo experienced heady growth in user metrics at that time endorsed the microblogging platform. *—PTI*

Sensex hits historic mark, Nifty ends at record high

Sensex hit 80K mark for 1st time, Nifty records high of 24,286.50

MUMBAI, 3 JULY

Benchmark BSE Sensex breached the historic 80,000 level intraday for the first time while Nifty raced more than 162 points to a fresh lifetime high on Wednesday following heavy buying in banking and FMCG shares amid firm global market trends.

The 30-share Sensex hit the historic 80,000 mark for the first time earlier in the day. It surged 632.85 points or 0.79 per cent to hit a record intraday high of 80,074.30.

The index later closed near the 80,000 level at 79,986.80, up by 545.35 points or 0.69 per cent over the last close.

Adani, Kotak, HDFC, Tata were among biggest gainers PHOTO: ANI

The BSE Sensex breached the 78,000 level on June 25 and 79,000 for the first time on June 27.

The Nifty climbed 162.65 points or 0.67 per cent to an all-time high of 24,286.50. During the day, it zoomed 183.4 points or 0.76 per cent to hit a fresh intraday record peak of 24,307.25.

Among the Sensex pack, Adani Ports, Kotak Mahindra Bank, HDFC Bank, Axis Bank, IndusInd Bank, State Bank of India, Power Grid, JSW Steel, Bajaj Finance and Tata Steel were the biggest gainers.

Tata Consultancy Services, Titan, Reliance Industries, Tata Motors and Larsen & Toubro were the laggards.

BSE benchmark declined 34.74 points or 0.04 per cent to settle at 79,441.45 in a volatile trade on Tuesday. During the day, it jumped 379.68 points or 0.47 per cent to hit a record peak of 79,855.87. *—PTI*

'BEWARE OF FRAUD'

SEBI sets rules to prevent mkt abuse for brokers

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

Markets regulator SEBI has notified an institutional mechanism that requires stock brokers to put in place systems for detection and prevention of market abuse.

Before this, there were no specific regulatory provisions that cast responsibility on brokers to have a system to prevent market abuse.

Under the institutional mechanism, broking firms as well as its senior management will be accountable for detection and prevention of fraud or market abuse, by setting up robust surveillance and control systems, according to a notification.

Further, brokers need to frame appropriate escalation and reporting mechanisms.

SEBI has also listed out probable instances of fraud or market abuse which a broker's system needs to be equipped to monitor. The probable instances can include creation of misleading appearance of trading, price manipulation, front running, pump and dump, insider trading and mis-selling and unauthorised trading, including facilitation of 'mule accounts'.

In its notification dated June 27, the stock broker will have to inform details pertaining to detection of any suspicious activity to the stock exchanges within 48 hours from such detection.

The stock broker will have to establish and implement whistleblower policy providing for a confidential channel for employees and other stakeholders to raise concerns about suspected fraudulent, unfair or unethical practices. The policy should establish procedures to ensure adequate protection of whistleblowers.

To give these effects, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has amended stock brokers and PFUTP rules that became effective from 27 June. *—PTI*

India inks $170M loan with ADB for stronger pandemic readiness

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

India has signed a USD 170 million policy-based loan with the Asian Development Bank to enhance the country's health system preparedness for pandemics, the Union Ministry of Finance said.

According to the Ministry of Finance, the loan will help to consolidate and strengthen India's health system preparedness and response capacity to future pandemics.

The loan agreement 'Strengthened and Measurable Actions for Resilient and Transformative Health Systems Programme (Subprogramme 1)' was signed on Tuesday by Juhi Mukherjee, Joint Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, on behalf of the Government of India and Mio Oka, Country Director of ADB's India Resident Mission for ADB.

PHOTO: X/@ADB

As per the ministry, the ADB programme will help the government's ongoing efforts in further strengthening disease surveillance, ensuring the sufficiency and quality of health professionals, and promoting climate-resilient public health infrastructure and service delivery.

The ministry also added that the programme will be anchored in major government plans and initiatives including the National Health Policy 2017, Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM), the National One Health Mission, and the government's efforts to strengthen human resources for health (HRH).

The ministry stated that the programme will help manage integrated public health laboratories in five states and district critical care hospital blocks to improve services for infectious diseases and critical illnesses. It will assist the inter-sectoral governing body and multi-sector task force in establishing green and climate-resilient healthcare facilities. Innovative solutions for service delivery would also be supported. *—ANI*

PHOTO: ANI

ICT, Infosys Foundation to skill 48K students

BENGALURU, 3 JULY

Infosys Foundation, the philanthropic and CSR arm of software services firm Infosys Ltd, and ICT Academy of Tamil Nadu, a non-profit organisation, have joined hands with an aim to skill 48,000 students over a period of three years in various fields. The students will be trained in IT, banking, financial services and insurance, retail, e-commerce, logistics, knowledge process outsourcing, and soft skills.

Infosys Foundation has committed a grant of over Rs 33 crore towards this project, it said in a statement on Wednesday. It announced that it has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with ICT Academy to increase the employability of young learners in rural India. *—PTI*

'India faces high debt, but sustainable for now'

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

At nearly 82 per cent of GDP, India's public debt is very high, but the country doesn't face debt sustainability issue on account of high growth rate and higher share of local currency debt, NCAER Director General Poonam Gupta has said.

PHOTO: ANI

Participating in an event organised by NCAER, Gupta said India's high debt levels are sustainable for now because of higher real or nominal GDP and as most of the debt is held in rupee.

The states together hold one-third of the total debt, and in the 'business as usual' situation, their debt levels will only increase further over the next five years, Gupta said.

Drawing a comparison between Punjab, one of the most indebted states, and Gujarat, with low debt, she pointed out that the most indebted states are ironically better off, as the interest rate is similar for all and in fact more indebted states hold longer maturity and pay little premium.

As of 2022-23, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Bihar are top three most indebted states, while least indebted are Odisha, Maharashtra. *—PTI*

India's services sector growth rises in June: PMI

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

India's services sector growth quickened in June from May's five-month low, amid a stronger rise in new orders and an unprecedented expansion in international sales, a monthly survey said on Wednesday.

The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Services Business Activity Index rose from 60.2 in May to 60.5 in June, pointing to a sharp expansion in output.

In the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

"Activity growth in India's service sector accelerated in June, with the index rising by 0.3 ppt (percentage point) to 60.5, led by an increase in both domestic and international new orders. This encouraged services firms to increase their staffing levels at the fastest pace since August 2022," said Pranjul Bhandari, Chief India Economist at HSBC.

Demand strength and rising intakes of new business were cited as the key determinants of growth. New orders received by Indian service providers continued to increase in June, extending the current sequence of expansion to nearly three years.

There was also a record expansion in international orders. Asia, Australia, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East and the US were all cited as sources of new work from abroad. *—PTI*

LENDERS REJECT SETTLEMENT PROPOSAL BY JP

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

Lenders of Jaiprakash Associates Ltd (JAL) led by ICICI Bank on Wednesday rejected the modified one-time settlement proposal, in which the debt-ridden group had offered a higher upfront payment and sales of its cement assets.

During a hearing before the insolvency appellate tribunal NCLAT, senior advocate Sajeev Sen representing ICICI Bank informed the bench about the rejection of the OTS (one-time settlement) scheme by the lenders.

It had proposed an additional deposit of Rs 300 crore besides the Rs 200 crore already furnished. *—PTI*

Revenues of top states to grow at 8-10%

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

Revenue of India's top states, which account for over 90 per cent of India's gross state domestic product, is likely to grow at a steady pace of 8-10 per cent this current financial year 2024-25, according to an analysis by rating agency Crisil Ratings.

The rating agency projected that the top states' revenue will clock towards Rs 38 lakh crore. Last fiscal - 2023-24, the revenue grew at 7.5 per cent.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

The growth, according to the rating agency, will be primarily supported by healthy Goods and Service Tax (GST) collections and devolution from the Centre. While revenue from the tax on liquor sales (10 per cent of total revenue) will remain stable, mid-single-digit growth in sales tax collections from petroleum products (7-8 per cent) and grants recommended by the Fifteenth Finance Commission (10-11 per cent) will be modest. *—ANI*

NCAER REPORT

Poverty drops to 8.5% from 21.2% in 2011-12: Nilekani's think tank

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

Poverty in India is estimated to have declined to 8.5 per cent in 2022-24 from 21.2 per cent in 2011-12, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, according to a research paper by the economic think tank NCAER.

The paper titled 'Rethinking Social Safety Nets in a Changing Society', authored by Sonalde Desai of NCAER, used data from the newly completed Wave 3 of the India Human Development Survey (IHDS) as well as data from Waves 1 and 2 of the IHDS.

"According to the IHDS findings...poverty declined significantly between 2004-2005 and 2011-12 (from a headcount ratio of 38.6 to 21.2), and it continued to decline between 2011-12 and 2022-24 (from 21.2 to 8.5) despite the challenges posed by the pandemic," the paper said.

The paper said economic growth and poverty decline create a dynamic climate that requires nimble social protection programmes.

Traditional strategies designed to address chronic poverty in a large segment of society may be less effective as accidents of birth become less important than accidents of life, it added.

The paper noted that ensuring social protection systems keep up with the pace of social transformation will be a key challenge for India as it strives towards equitable development.

Economic growth and poverty decline create a dynamic climate that requires social protection programmes PHOTO: FREEPIK

According to the paper, during an era of economic growth, when opportunities increase, the long-term determinants of poverty may decline while accidents of life associated with natural disasters, illness and death, and changes in occupation-specific opportunities may become more important.

- The paper said economic growth and poverty decline create a dynamic climate that requires nimble social protection programmes

Earlier this year, NITI Aayog CEO BVR Subrahmanyam had said the latest consumer expenditure survey indicates that poverty has come down to 5 per cent in the country and people are becoming prosperous both in rural and urban areas.

The National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, released data on household consumption expenditure for the year 2022-23 on 24 February that showed per capita monthly household expenditure more than doubled in 2022-23 as compared to 2011-12.

The poverty line recommended by the Tendulkar Committee Report was set to Rs 447 and Rs 579 for rural and urban areas, respectively, but varied between states for 2004-2005. *—PTI*

EURO 2024

Demiral's heroics help Turkey book quarterfinal spot

Turkey's coach said that absent captain Hakan, who was missing was irreplaceable

LEIPZIG, 3 JULY

Merih Demiral was Turkey's unlikely hero with both goals in a 2-1 win over Austria on Tuesday that booked their place in the Euro 2024 quarter-finals. The Al-Ahli centre-back smashed home after just 58 seconds and produced a towering header on the hour mark to double Turkey's lead. Michael Gregoritsch quickly pulled a goal back for Austria and only a stunning save from Mert Gunok denied Christoph Baumgartner a dramatic equaliser deep into stoppage-time. Turkey advance to face the Netherlands in the last eight in Berlin on Saturday. Austria had emerged as dark horses to go far on the perceived weaker side of the draw after topping a group including France and the Netherlands.

Ralf Rangnick's side had also thrashed Turkey 6-1 in a friendly in March, but this time they failed to recover from a nightmare start.

Real Madrid's Arda Guler was a constant threat to the Austrian defence and his teasing delivery from a corner caused chaos inside the first minute. Baumgartner's clearance off the line hit team-mate Stefan Posch, goalkeeper Patrick Pentz clawing it out to Demiral, who lashed into the roof of the net for the second fastest goal ever at a European Championship.

Merih Demiral celebrates after scoring second goal against Austria PHOTO: X / EUFA.COM

Turkey's raucous fans exploded in a deafening celebration, but they were nearly brought back down to earth straight away. —*PTI*

Colombia's defender Daniel Munoz fights for the ball with Brazil's forward Raphinha PHOTO: @COPAAMERICA

Netherlands beat Romania 3-0

MUNICH, 3 JULY

The Netherlands could be peaking at just the right time. The Dutch team reached its first European Championship quarterfinal in 16 years with a 3-0 win over Romania on Tuesday after its best performance by far at Euro 2024. Cody Gakpo broke the deadlock in the 20th minute and substitute Donyell Malen scored two late goals to send the Dutch to their first quarterfinal in the tournament since 2008. "I think the whole performance today was outstanding and that's what we need to have a chance to continue in this tournament," coach Ronald Koeman said. "This is the level. If you go down to that level. —*PTI*

Copa: Brazil reach QF with 1-1 Colombia draw

PANAMA, 3 JULY

Brazil played out an action-packed 1-1 draw with Colombia in California on Tuesday, setting up a thrilling Copa America quarter-final clash with Uruguay. Colombia, who topped Group D with seven points, will face Panama in the quarter-finals.

The match at Levi's Stadium lived up to its expectations as both teams came out aggressively. Daniel Munoz's first-half strike for Colombia canceled out an impressive early free kick from Brazil's Raphinha. The result extended Colombia's unbeaten streak to 26 matches but ended their 10-match winning run.

Raphinha opened the scoring for Brazil in the 12th minute with a sublime free-kick into the top corner. Colombia thought they had equalized when Davinson Sanchez headed in a cross from Rodriguez, but the goal was disallowed for offside after a lengthy VAR check.

Brazil claimed a penalty in the 42nd minute when Munoz brought down Vinicius in the box, but replays showed the defender got a touch on the ball. Colombia leveled the score in first-half stoppage time when Jhon Cordoba found Munoz, who rifled his shot into the net. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

'Neeraj may win another medal in the Paris Olympics'

VIJAYNAGAR, 3 JULY

Star Indian javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra is in the best physical condition to claim a medal at the Paris Games, said Spencer Mackay, the head of strength and conditioning at Inspire Institute of Sports (IIS). The 26-year-old Indian, who had undergone rehabilitation at IIS for an elbow injury before winning the Olympic gold in Tokyo in 2021, has been troubled by an adductor niggle for the past couple of months. hopra is not participating in Sunday's Paris Diamond League and will straight away compete at the Olympics.—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Advani is off to a winning start at 2024 ABC

RIYADH, 3 JULY

Ace Indian cueist Pankaj Advani started his campaign at the 2024 Asian Billiards Championship on a high, notching victory over Aung Phyo and Yuttapop Pakpoj here. The 38-year-old, who is vying for a hat-trick of Asian Billiards titles, first beat Myanmar's Aung Phyo 4-2 and then emerged victorious in a thrilling clash over Thailand's Pakpoj 4-3. "It is always good to start a tournament on a positive note. These two victories have boosted my confidence and I have my eyes set on my target. Given that the sport is quite unpredictable, I am not taking anything for granted," Advani said.—*PTI*

Throat cancer: Geoffrey Boycott to undergo surgery

LONDON, 3 JULY

In a sobering announcement, Sir Geoffrey Boycott, the iconic former England batter, has revealed that he has been diagnosed with throat cancer for the second time. The 83-year-old cricket legend, known for his toughness both on and off the field, is set to undergo surgery later this month to combat the illness. Sir Geoffrey's first encounter with throat cancer came in 2002 when he was 62 years old.—*PTI*

A young Indian cricket team led by skipper Shubman Gill PHOTO: PTI

Gill-led new-look Team India land in Harare

HARARE, 3 JULY

A young Indian cricket team led by skipper Shubman Gill and with National Cricket Academy chief VVS Laxman as coach arrived here to play a five-match T20 International series against Zimbabwe beginning July 6.

The team was seen exiting the airport with their luggage in a video posted by Zimbabwe Cricket on X. The entire squad had departed from Mumbai on Tuesday, while Gill, who was a traveling reserve with the T20 World Cup side in the Americas, arrived here from New York after a break.

"We welcome T20 World Cup champions India," wrote ZC on Tuesday night in a post on 'X'.

Young top-order batter Riyan Parag, who will be making his India debut in the series, said in a video posted by BCCI that he had a childhood dream of traveling like this (with the national side).

"The feel of donning an India jersey, traveling with the side is different. Coming from Assam, I had this dream of playing for India. Happy. There will be a special connection for Zimbabwe when I play my first match. "That will be a special moment for that ground and myself, which would be very sacred," he said. "After misplacing my passport, to phones, we are finally here after a 20-hour journey. Now, looking forward to the tour," Parag added.

Another newcomer, medium pacer Tushar Deshpande, said the feeling of being in the national setup is "slowly sinking in and it's like a dream come true for me. Playing for the country is a very special thing." —*PTI*

Indo-Pak match on 1 March in Lahore

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has slotted its team's marquee Champions Trophy match against arch-foes India in Lahore on 1 March next year but the BCCI is yet to give its consent to the tentative schedule, a senior ICC Board member told PTI on Wednesday.

The tournament is slated from 19 February to 9 March with 10 March as Reserve Day.It is understood PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi, who was invited to watch the T20 World Cup final in Barbados, submitted a 15-match schedule with all of India's games kept in Lahore for security and logistical reasons." The PCB has submitted the draft of the 15-match ICC Champions Trophy. Seven games in Lahore, three in Karachi, and five in Rawalpindi," an ICC Board member said."The opening match will be held in Karachi with two semifinals in Karachi and Rawalpindi, final in Lahore.

All India matches (including semifinal if the team qualifies) in Lahore," the source added.India has been clubbed with Pakistan, Bangladesh, and New Zealand in Group A. Group B comprises Australia, South Africa, England, and Afghanistan.

PHOTO: PTI

Recently, ICC head of events Chris Tetley met PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi in Islamabad after the world body's security team inspected the venues and other arrangements. The last tournament that Pakistan hosted was the Asia Cup in 2023, conducted in a 'Hybrid Model' with India playing their matches in Sri Lanka as the government refused to permit the players' travel across the border." —*PTI*

Gauff crushes Todoni to reach third round

LONDON, 3 JULY

Coco Gauff did not look at her imperious best under the roof on Wimbledon's Court One on Wednesday but she was always in control of an error-strewn second-round 6-2 6-1 victory over Romanian qualifier Anca Todoni.The U.S. Open champion slipped and fell twice on the slick court and muttered to herself during the one-hour six-minute match against an opponent ranked 140 places below her.

Humbert is into third round

Frenchman Ugo Humbert, the No 16 seed, advanced to the third round of Wimbledon by winning against Dutchman Botic van de Zandschulp 7-6 (9), 6-1, 6-3 at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club in London on Wednesday afternoon.Humbert, ranked No. 16, will face American Brandon Nakashima next.The Frenchman beat Kazakh Alexander Shevchenko (6-1, 4-6, 7-6 (2), 6-7 (3), 6-1) ahead of his victory.In the previous round of The Championships, Zandschulp, ranked No. 97, defeated wildcard Liam Broady (6-2, 4-6, 6-3, 6-2).London (Grand Slam), other second-round results Taylor Fritz (13) beat Christopher O'Connell: 6-1, 6-2, 6-4. Cameron Norrie beat Facundo Diaz Acosta: 7-5, 7-5, 6-3. Flavio Cobolli beat Rinky Hijikata: 7-5, 4-6, 6-4, 6-4. Jack Draper (28) beat Elias Ymer (Q): 3-6, 6-3, 6-3, 4-6, 6-3. —*PTI*

Coco Gauff and Ugo Humbert PHOTO: @WIMBLEDON

Bodhana Sivanandan PHOTO: PTI

Nine-year-old chess prodigy picked for England

HAMBURG, 3 JULY

She is a nine-year-old British prodigy, who has already caused a commotion in the chess world with her fearless play and string of spectacular victories.

Now Bodhana Sivanandan, a nine-year-old from Harrow, is set to make history as the youngest person to represent England in an international sporting competition. Sivanandan, who only took up chess in lockdown, is one of five players chosen for England's women's team to play in the Chess Olympiad in Budapest in September. "I'm so pleased to be picked for England," said Sivanandan, who has set her sights on becoming a grandmaster and winning the women's world title. "It's a great honor and I'm looking forward to being part of a team." "Sky Brown made her US Skateboard Open debut when she was 8. —*PTI*

Wimbledon to engage audiences in India

MUMBAI, 3 JULY

The All England Lawn Tennis Club is pleased to continue its commitment to bringing fans of The Championships, Wimbledon in India an improved viewing experience, as the popularity of the event continues to increase.

Year-on-year viewing figures in India increased +96% in 2023 compared with 2022 and entries into this year's Wimbledon Public Ballot from fans in India rose +74% compared to last year. Acknowledging the growing popularity, the All England Club has identified India as a key growth market among its ongoing commitment to bring the unique atmosphere and excitement of Wimbledon to a global audience.

PHOTO: PTI

- The All England Club aims to foster tennis enthusiasm and engage audiences in India. * YoY viewing of The Championships, Wimbledon has seen significant growth in India, with 2023 figures surging by 96% compared to 2022.

Wimbledon has evolved from its origins as a private members' croquet club in 1868, to one of the world's biggest annual sporting events and one of the most well-respected brands in sport. —*PTI*

Vinesh gets visa for Spain

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

World Championships bronze medallist wrestler Vinesh Phogat will be able to travel to Spain for a competition as she received her Schengen visa on Wednesday with help from the government.

Phogat, who is competing at the Grand Prix of Spain 2024 in Madrid, has her flight scheduled for Wednesday night but did not get her visa till this morning.

She initially sought "urgent help" from Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya and the Ministry of External Affairs as she did not have information on her visa. —*PTI*

Vinesh Phogat PHOTO: PTI

30 swimming prospects to get training at IIS

BELLARY, 3 JULY

As many as 30 "high-potential" swimmers have been identified for training as part of a newly launched 'Mizuho Elite Programme' at the Inspire Institute of Sports here to prepare them for the 2026 Asian Games and the 2028 Olympic qualifiers.

Inspire Institute of Sports has entered into a partnership with Mizuho Bank for this. The two entities have identified swimming as one of the key sports that can be developed at the grassroots level and announced a partnership to support 30 swimmers.

Launched in 2023, the IIS Swimming Programme features two state-of-the-art pools and promises technical coaching, competition exposure, and support in sports science, strength and conditioning, nutrition, education, mental health, and residential facilities. Talented young swimmers Maana Patel, Kushagra Rawat, Ishaan Mehra, Astha Choudhury. —*PTI*

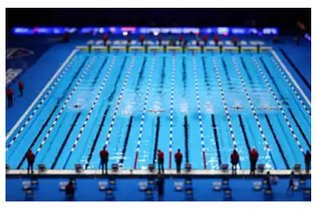


PHOTO: PTI

RANKED NO. 1

Pandya becomes first Indian T20I allrounder

BRIDGETOWN, 3 JULY

Hardik Pandya has become the first Indian to occupy the No. 1 spot for T20I allrounders, as per the latest ICC rankings. He climbed two spots to join Sri Lanka captain Wanindu Hasaranga at the top following his all-round contributions in India's successful T20 World Cup campaign, where they went unbeaten to lift the trophy.

Pandya smashed 144 runs at an average of 48 and a strike rate of 151, while also bagging 11 wickets at 17.36 in the West Indies and USA. That included a match-winning haul of 3 for 20 in the final against South Africa, which India won by seven runs to lift the trophy. Pandya's best performance with the bat in the World Cup came against Bangladesh, as he hit 50* off 27 balls.

His team-mate Jasprit Bumrah, the Player of the Series in the T20 World Cup, meanwhile made big gains in the bowlers' rankings. Bumrah rose 12 places to No. 12 after claiming 15 wickets at an average of 8.26, and an economy of just 4.17. With South Africa requiring only another 30 runs from the last five overs in the final, it was Bumrah's spell towards the end that helped turn the game around for India.

Hardik Pandya PHOTO: PTI

- Hardik Pandya has become the first Indian to occupy the No. 1 spot for T20I allrounders, as per the latest ICC rankings.

—*PTI*